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of the Deccan, that their example found many eager imitators. In one of these predatory visits, a prince named Mohammed Toghluk, was so much struck with the central situation of Dowlatabad, formerly under the name of Deogur the capital of a powerful Hindoo state, that he resolved upon making it, instead of Delhi, the seat of the Mahometan empire in India. He returned to Delhi for a short period, but recurring to his former resolution, he again transferred the seat of government to Dowlatabad, and carried off thither the whole of the inhabitants of Delhi, leaving his ancient metropolis to become, in the language of the Mahometan historian, a resort for owls, and a dwelling-place for the beasts of the desert. But this prince was not destined to enjoy repose in his newly chosen capital. Intestine commotion and foreign invasion desolated his dominions, and in Dowlatabad, under the very eye of the monarch, pestilence and famine thinned the number of the pining and miserable exiles with whom his wanton tyranny had hoped to stock his favourite city. After a time permission was given to the inhabitants to return to Delhi. Of those who made the attempt, some perished on the road by famine, while most of those who gained the city found that they had escaped death by the way, only to encounter it in the same frightful form at the place from which they had been so capriciously expelled, and a return to which had been the object of their fondest hopes. Famine raged in the city of Delhi, says the native historian, so that men ate one another. In every quarter

CHAP. I. disaster attended Mohammed Toghluk. The Punjaub was invaded. Bengal revolted, and the greater part of his possessions in the Deccan were wrested from him. In those provinces where the authority of Mohammed Toghluk was still recognized, his cruelty and extortion had excited an universal feeling of detestation, and he complained that he no sooner put down disaffection in one place, than it broke out in another. The person to whom this complaint was addressed ventured to suggest as a remedy, that the sovereign should abdicate the throne. The advice was received by Mohammed with an expression of anger, and the avowal of a determination to scourge his subjects for their rebellion, whatever might be the consequence. This intention he did not live to fulfil. An attack of indigestion relieved his enemies from the effects of his vengeance, and himself from a combination of difficulties, which only the highest genius or the happiest fortune could have overcome.

Under his successor, Feroze Toghluk, a qualified independence of the throne of Delhi seems to have been conceded both to Bengal and the Deccan. This prince, celebrated both for the number and magnitude of his public works, as well as for his clemency, moderation, and love of learning, is remarkable also for having twice abdicated the throne. He died at A.D. 1088. an advanced age, ten years before the invasion of Timour, better known in Europe under the name of Tamerlane.

Timour was a Mogul—a race, the fame of whose arms had already spread terror wherever they ap-

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peared, and who had aided in changing the face of the civilized world. The Huns, who under the ferocious Attila gave a fatal blow to the tottering fabric of the Roman empire, were, it has been supposed, chiefly Moguls.* In the thirteenth century, their leader, Chengiz, or Zingis, having subdued all the neighbouring Tartar tribes, extended his conquests far and wide, leaving to his successors a larger extent of dominion than Rome possessed at the period of her highest grandeur. They pursued the course which he had so successfully begun. Carrying their arms westward, they traversed Russia and Poland, and advancing their hordes into Hungary, Bohemia, and Silesia, struck terror into the heart of Europe. The empire was divided after the death of Chengiz, and the thrones which arose on its foundation, after a time, experienced the ordinary lot of Oriental sovereignties. Weakness and disorder had overspread them, when the barbaric grandeur of the Mogul empire was revived by the energy of a soldier of fortune, who, having delivered his own countrymen from subjection, led them forth to add to the conquests, and swell the list of crimes by which, at former periods, they had devastated the world.

The situation of the Mahometan government at Delhi was calculated to invite the attacks of ambition. For a considerable period the city had been a prey to disorder and violence. After a series of short and weak reigns, marked only by

* Introduction to Leyden and Erskine's Translation of Baber's Memoirs, page xviii.

CHAP. I. crime and suffering, two candidates for the vacant throne were set up by rival bodies of chieftains. Each held his court at Delhi; the pretensions of both were maintained by an appeal to arms, and thus was produced the extraordinary spectacle of two emperors at war with each other while resident in the same city. For three years the possession of the sceptre was thus contested, the people being subjected to all the calamities of civil war, as carried on in the East. At length, Yekbal, an ambitious and intriguing omrah, succeeded in obtaining the imperial power, which he exercised in the name of a prince who enjoyed nothing of sovereignty beyond the title.

A.D. 1398. It was at this period that Timour, emphatically called "the firebrand of the universe," commenced his march. He crossed the Indus and advanced towards Delhi, his course being everywhere marked by the most horrible excesses. While preparing to attack the capital, Timour became apprehensive of danger from the number of prisoners which had accumulated during his progress, and, to avert it, he put to death, in cold blood, nearly one hundred thousand of them. Having freed himself from this source of disquiet, he arrayed his troops against the imperial city. Its wretched ruler issued forth to make a show of resistance; but it can scarcely be said that an engagement took place, for the troops of the Emperor of Delhi fled, almost without fighting, pursued by the conqueror to the very gates of the city. The sovereign and his min-

ister fled from its walls under cover of the night, and the submission of the principal inhabitants having removed every impediment to the entry of Timour, he caused himself to be proclaimed emperor, and his title to be acknowledged in all the mosques. The first function exercised by a Mahometan conqueror is to levy contributions on the conquered, and arrangements were made for carrying into effect this necessary consequence of Timour's success. Some degree of equity was to be observed, for the measure of contributions was to be regulated by the rank and wealth of the inhabitants. Some of the richest, however, it was represented, had shut themselves up, and refused to pay their shares. Troops were sent to enforce compliance; confusion and plunder ensued; the city was set on fire, and the triumph of Timour closed with one vast scene of indiscriminate massacre and pillage. The flames which had been kindled by vengeance or despair, irradiated streets streaming with blood and choked with the bodies of the dead. Amidst these horrors, the author of them secured a booty so vast, that the cautious historian* refrains from mentioning the reputed amount, inasmuch as it exceeded all belief.

The success of Timour was not followed by the permanent results which might have been expected. He remained at Delhi only a few days, and having glutted himself with plunder, returned to the capital of his Tartar dominions. His invasion of India re-

* Ferishta.

CHAP. I. sembled rather one of those predatory irruptions, so common in Eastern warfare, than a settled plan of conquest. After he quitted Delhi, his authority virtually ceased, and the city remained for some time a scene of the most frightful disorder. It slowly recovered from this state, and the authority of its former ruler, within its walls, was to some extent restored, but the reins of extended empire had slipped irrecoverably from his grasp. The state of anarchy which had prevailed had emboldened the governors of the provinces to renounce their allegiance to the Court of Delhi. New kingdoms sprung into independent existence, and in a brief period, a very small district round the city of Delhi was all that remained to its ruler.

Though the positive authority of Timour ceased with his departure from Delhi, a prince named Khizr, who obtained the government shortly afterwards, acknowledged a nominal vassalage to him, and caused coin to be struck in his name; but the dynasty of Timour was not actually established in India until the celebrated Baber, after some abortive attempts, succeeded in seating himself on the throne of Delhi.

A.D. 1526. In establishing his authority, Baber encountered difficulties which, to a mind of less energy, might have appeared insuperable. He persevered, however, and extended his conquests as far as Behar, when his progress was terminated by his death.*

* The character of Baber, as depicted in his Autobiography, exhibits traits not expected in a Mahometan conqueror. He not

That event, according to some authors, was hastened by superstition. His favourite son, Hoomayoon, was

only cultivated the literature of his country and religion, but seems to have been not less emulous of distinction as a wit and convivial companion than as a soldier. He seems to have lived with his courtiers and camp associates with all the freedom of our second Charles, and his Memoirs record scenes which might have been thought of impossible occurrence under the reign of an Oriental prince, a careful general, and a good Mussulman. The following are instances: "About the time of noon-day prayers, I mounted to take a ride, and afterwards going on board of a boat, we had a drinking bout. * * * We continued drinking spirits in the boat till bed-time prayers, when, being completely drunk, we mounted, and taking torches in our hands, came at full gallop to the camp from the river side, falling sometimes on one side of the horse and sometimes on the other. I was miserably drunk, and next morning, when they told me of our having galloped into the camp with lighted torches in our hands, I had not the slightest recollection of the circumstance."—Memoirs, 4to. 1826, page 259.

"On Saturday, the 11th, there was a party between afternoon and evening prayers. We went out to the terrace of the pigeon-house and sat down to our wine. When it was rather late, some horsemen were observed coming along Deh-Afghanan road, proceeding to the city. I ascertained that they were Dervish Mahommed Surbar and his people coming on an embassy from Mirzakhan; we sent for him up to the terrace: 'Put aside the form and state of an ambassador,' said I, 'and join us without ceremony.' Dervish Mahommed accordingly came, and having placed before me a few articles of the presents which he had brought, sat down beside us. At that time he was strict in his deportment and did not drink wine. We, however, got extremely drunk."—Page 269.

"Hassan Nebinck, who had come on the part of Mirzakhan, after giving me due notice of his intentions, here met and waited on me. We continued at this place drinking till the sun was on the decline, when we set out. Those who had been of the party were completely drunk. Syed Casan was so drunk that two of his servants were obliged to put him on horseback, and brought

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dangerously ill, and some pious follower of the Prophet suggested that, in similar circumstances, Heaven had been sometimes pleased to accept the most valuable thing possessed by one friend as an offering in exchange for the life of another. Baber was struck by the suggestion, and exclaimed that, next to the life of Hoomayoon, his own life was what he most valued; and that this he would devote as a sacrifice for his son's. His friends pointed out a more easy though highly costly sacrifice, in a diamond taken at Agra, reputed the most valuable in the world, and quoted the authority of ancient sages in proof that the proper offering was the dearest of worldly possessions. But Baber was inflexible, and proceeded to carry his intention into effect, according to the most approved forms of Mahometan piety. He walked three times round the sick prince, in imitation of the mode of presenting offerings on solemn occasions, and then retired to prayer. After some time, it is stated that he was heard to exclaim,

him to the camp with great difficulty. Dost Mahommed Balin was so far gone, that those who were along with him were unable with all their exertions to get him on horseback. They poured a great quantity of water over him, but all to no purpose. At this moment a body of Affghans appeared in sight; Amin Mahommed Ferklan, being very drunk, gravely gave it as his opinion, that rather than leave him in the condition in which he was to fall into the hands of the enemy, it was better at once to cut off his head and carry it away. Making another exertion, however, with much difficulty they contrived to throw him upon a horse which they led along and so brought him off."—Page 278.

The jovial propensities of Baber probably shortened his life, as he died in his fiftieth year.

"I have borne it away, I have borne it away," and from that time Baber's health is said to have declined, and that of Hoomayoon to have improved. On the recovery of Hoomayoon, it is only necessary to remark that he enjoyed the advantage of youth. With regard to the decline of Baber, it is to be observed that he was previously in ill health, and no one acquainted with the effects of imagination in producing or aggravating disease, will doubt that the conviction of his being a doomed man might accelerate the fate which he believed inevitable, more especially when acting upon a frame previously enfeebled by sickness. But whether this effect was produced or not, there is certainly nothing remarkable either in the death of the father or the recovery of the son.

The son of Baber, after a few years of stormy contention, was forced to yield the throne to an Affghan usurper, named Sheer. Many public works, tending alike to use and ornament, are attributed to this prince; but their reputed number and magnitude seem hardly consistent with the brevity of his reign, which lasted only five years. In addition to his other measures for the public advantage, he established horse posts for the benefit both of the government and of commerce. Tradition adds, that during his reign, such was the public security, that travellers rested and slept with their goods in the high-ways without apprehension of robbery.* The

* The British islands are not without their share of such traditions. Thus Alfred is said to have hung gold bracelets upon

CHAP. I. death of Sheer was succeeded by a struggle for the crown, which ended in the restoration of the exiled son of Baber. This prince dying from a fall very shortly after his elevation to sovereign power, made way for his son Akbar, whose name occupies so conspicuous a place in the pages of Oriental history.

A.D. 1556. Akbar was not fourteen years of age when he ascended the throne. The youth of the sovereign exposed the empire to attack, and the task of defending it was entrusted to a distinguished chief named Beiram, who entered with vigour upon the task of reducing to obedience all who disputed the authority of the monarch. He succeeded in giving stability to the throne; but his imperious temper, aided by the intrigues of those who hated or envied him, gradually diminished his influence at court; and the attainment by the sovereign of the period of manhood made him naturally anxious to be released from a state of pupilage. Akbar accordingly issued a proclamation announcing his own assumption of the reins of government, and forbidding obedience to any orders not bearing his seal.

trees by the highways, as a challenge to the honesty of his subjects; and such was either the high state of morals, or the universal terror of the law, that no one dared to appropriate the tempting prizes. The muse of Moore has commemorated a like happy state of society in Ireland, when a beautiful virgin, decked in the richest and rarest gems, made a pilgrimage in safety throughout the island, with no protection but what she found in "her maiden smile" and the honour of her countrymen. If the existence of these palmy days of honesty were to be credited, it must be inferred that peace and civilization were unfavourable to the security of property.

Beiram had recourse to rebellion, but, being unsuccessful, was compelled to throw himself on the clemency of his sovereign. Akbar received his repentant minister with the greatest kindness, and offered him his choice of a provincial government, a residence at court, or a pilgrimage to Mecca, with a retinue and allowances suitable to his rank. Beiram chose the last, but never reached the place to which discontent and devotion to the Mahometan faith had united in directing his steps, being assassinated on the road by an Affghan, whose father he had slain in battle.

The reign of Akbar was long, and during the greater part of it he was engaged in resisting rebellion or invasion within his actual dominions; in endeavouring to reduce to entire subjection those countries which owned a nominal dependence upon him, or in extending his empire by fresh conquests. The spirit of conquest is indeed interwoven with Mahometanism, one of whose fundamental principles is, that unbelieving nations should be reduced to the alternative of extermination or tribute. But the martial followers of Mahomet have never been careful to restrict their aggressions to those whom the Koran surrenders to their mercy; the fact of those whose dominions they would appropriate being, like themselves, devout believers in the Prophet of Mecca, has rarely arrested their arms, or imposed any check upon their ambition. In the time of Akbar, the greater part of the Deccan was subject to Mahometan princes, the descendants of former

CHAP. I. invaders; but community of faith did not protect them from the effects of Akbar's desire for empire. Akbar demanded that they should acknowledge his supremacy. This they refused; and the emperor proceeded to attack them. His success was but partial, but it was sufficient in his own judgment to authorize his assuming the title of Emperor of the Deccan. With one of the kings who had denied his right to superiority, Akbar entered into relations of amity and alliance. The Shah of Beejapoor offered his daughter in marriage to the son of Akbar. The offer was accepted. The nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence. Ferishta, the eminent Mahometan historian, is said to have attended the princess on the occasion, and, at the invitation of her husband, to have accompanied the royal pair to the city of Berhampoor. But neither the conversation of the learned historian, nor the charms of the youthful bride, preserved the prince from courses injurious to his health and very inconsistent with his creed; for, within a few months after his marriage, he died from the consequences of excessive drinking. His death, and the circumstances connected with it, severely affected the previously declining health of Akbar, who, in about six months, followed his son to the grave, after a reign of more than fifty-one years.*

* At the time of Akbar's death, his empire was divided into thirteen soobahs or vice-royalties. The soobahs were divided into circars, and these again into pergunnahs. The names of the soobahs were Allahabad, Agra, Oude, Ajmere, Guzerat, Behar,

Akbar left an only son, Selim, who ascended the throne after a brief struggle made by a party in the court to set him aside in favour of his own son. Selim, with Oriental modesty, assumed the name of Jehangir, Conqueror of the World. He was himself, however, under the control of a female, whose name is distinguished in the romantic annals of the East, and as his passion is the most remarkable circumstance of his life, it merits some notice. The captivator of Jehangir was the daughter of a Tartar adventurer, who had raised himself to favour in the court of Akbar, and, according to the legend current in Asia, her birth and infancy had been distinguished by circumstances of an extraordinary character.* But whatever might have been the events of her childhood, she grew up a woman of

Bengal, Delhi, Caubul, Lahore, Mooltan, Mahe, Berar, Candeish and Ahmednuggur. These and many other particulars relating to the revenue, population, arts, produce, and commerce of the various countries constituting the Empire of Akbar, were registered in a book compiled under the instructions of the emperor, and entitled "Ayeen Akbery," or Institutes of Akbar.

* It is said that her father travelling towards Hindostan with his wife far advanced in pregnancy, their means of subsistence failed in the desert. They had fasted three days, when their sorrows were aggravated by the birth of a daughter. Without the means of supporting themselves, they regarded the preservation of their child as hopeless, and after a struggle between natural affection and necessity, they yielded to the latter, and agreed to abandon the infant. She was placed accordingly at the foot of a tree, and having been covered with leaves, the travellers slowly departed. While the tree was in sight, the mother retained her resolution, but it left her when she could no longer behold the object which marked the spot where her child lay,

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the most exquisite beauty; while in the arts of music, dancing, poetry, and painting, it is said she had no equal among her own sex. Selim saw and admired her, but she was betrothed to a man of rank. The prince appealed to his father, who was then living, but Akbar would not suffer the contract to be infringed, even for the gratification of his son, and the heir to his throne.* The death of the emperor, and the succession of Selim, removed the obstacle thus interposed either by justice or prudence. The object of Selim's passion had indeed then become a wife, but this was a matter too trivial to be an impediment to the gratification of the wishes of the Conqueror of the World. The presumption of her husband in appropriating a treasure which a prince had aspired to possess was punished by his death. Various contrivances for bringing about

and she sunk on the ground, refusing to proceed without the infant thus early introduced to suffering. The father then returned to rescue his new-born daughter from an anticipated death by want and exposure, but was struck with horror on perceiving that she was in danger of perishing in a manner less lingering, but not less frightful. A huge snake had coiled itself round the body of the child, and was in the act of opening his jaws to devour her. The father uttered a wild cry, and the serpent, alarmed by so startling an invasion of the stillness of the desert, quitted its hold and glided to its retreat in the hollow of the tree. The father bore the rescued babe to her mother, and while relating the wonderful circumstances of her preservation, some travellers appeared, whose charity relieved their wants and preserved their lives.

* According to some accounts the marriage took place at the suggestion of Akbar, and in order to withdraw the lady from the attentions of the prince.

this result, are said to have been unsuccessfully resorted to before the object was achieved, but the relation has too much of the colouring of romance to entitle it to a place in authentic history.* On the inexplicable coldness with which Jehangir subsequently regarded the woman for whom he had incurred so much guilt, and on his sudden and extraordinary relapse into all the wild abandonment of his former passion,† it is unnecessary to dwell. Suffice it to say, that after the lapse of some years the emperor espoused the aspiring beauty, whose embraces he had bought with blood. The name of the enslaver of the Conqueror of the World was changed to Noor Mahal, Light of the Harem. At a later period her name was again changed by royal edict to Noor Jehan, Light of the World; and to distinguish her from other inmates of the seraglio, she was always addressed by the title of empress. Thenceforward

* It will be found in Dow's History of Hindostan, from the death of Akbar to the settlement of the empire under Aurungzebe.

† Although on the death of her husband the lady was received into the royal zenana, the emperor not only abandoned her to neglect, but even restricted her to such an allowance as was barely enough to procure for her and a few attendants the means of subsistence upon the most parsimonious scale. To improve her situation and to gain a celebrity which might reach the ear of the monarch, and probably rouse his dormant feelings, she had recourse to her skill in the arts of design, and her works, which were exposed for sale in the shops and bazaars, excited the admiration of the *cognoscenti* of the East. Their fame, as was intended, attracted the attention of the emperor, and a visit to one who possessed such various means of fascination, revived the ardour of his passion, which never again abated.

CHAP. I. her influence was unbounded. Her family were raised to the highest offices and distinctions. Her father became vizier, and her two brothers were raised to the rank of omrahs. The source of their elevation was not the most honourable, but they "bore their faculties meekly," and the vizier displayed extraordinary talents for government. The history of Noor Jehan—of her intrigues and triumphs, her crimes and her misfortunes—is full of interest; but to pursue it further would not be compatible with either the limits or the object of this work. One event, immediately relating to that object, must not be passed over. It was in the reign of Jehangir that an English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, deputed by James the First, arrived at the Mogul court, in the hope of securing protection to the English in the commerce which they were carrying on with India. Little, however, was effected by the ambassador, although his reception was courteous and magnificent.

The latter years of Jehangir's reign were attended by many vicissitudes of fortune, of which the haughty and vindictive character of his empress, and the rebellious spirit of his sons, were among the principal causes. The death of the emperor made way (A.D. 1627.) for the succession of his son, Shah Jehan, who commenced his reign by a liberal use of the bowstring and the dagger. Resolved, like Macbeth, to secure the throne, he was more successful than that usurper in carrying his resolution into effect; and, with the exception of himself and his sons, all the

male posterity of the house of Timour were disposed of.* Yet the reign of Shah Jehan was at an early period disturbed by disaffection. An able and ambitious general, named Lodi, who held the chief command in the Deccan, had manifested

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* The reflections of Dow upon these executions are not destitute of justice. It must be observed, however, that on all occasions he seems to have a tendency to allow too much force to "necessity, the tyrant's plea;" and to be disposed to sink the crimes of princes in consideration of any virtues which they might happen to possess, or to have the reputation of possessing. In reference to the wholesale slaughter perpetrated by Shah Jehan, he says, "The ideas which the Tartars of Northern Asia carried into their conquests in Hindostan were often fatal to the posterity of Timour. Monarchy descends through the channel of primogeniture, but despotism must never fall into the hands of a minor. The prince is the centre of union between all members of the state; and when he happens to be a child, the ties which bind the allegiance of the subject are dissolved. Habituated to battle and inured to depredation, the Tartars always adopted for their leader that person of the family of their princes who was most proper for their own mode of life, and lost sight of hereditary succession in the convenience of the nation. When they settled in better regions than their native country, they did not lay aside a custom suited only to incursion and war. The succession to the throne was never determined by established rules; and a door was opened to intrigue, to murder, and to civil war. Every prince, as if in an enemy's country, mounted the throne through conquest; and the safety of the state, as well as his own, forced him in a manner to become an assassin, and to stain the day of his ascension with the blood of his relatives. When, therefore, the despot died, ambition was not the only source of broils among his sons. They contended for life, as well as for the throne, under a certainty that the first must be lost, without a possession of the second. Self-preservation, that first principle of the human heart, converted frequently the humane prince into a cruel tyrant; and thus necessity prompted men to actions which their souls perhaps abhorred."

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reluctance to acknowledge the claims of Shah Jehan, and it became necessary to employ force to produce conviction of the rightfulness of the emperor's title. Lodi yielded to this argument, and tendering submission, was apparently forgiven. His pardon was even sealed by an appointment to a provincial government, but being ordered to attend at court, his reception there was accompanied by such studied insult, that an affray took place in the royal presence; swords were unsheathed, and Lodi and his relatives fled. He took the road to the Deccan, where he had previously established an interest. Thither he was followed by the emperor at the head of an immense army. After a variety of operations in different quarters, the imperial arms were everywhere successful, and Lodi, having experienced innumerable disasters, died, with the few followers that still adhered to him, in an encounter prompted by the energy of despair. The emperor continued to prosecute the war in the Deccan; but the ravages of the sword were but a small part of the calamities which that unhappy country was destined to bear. A severe drought produced famine —famine was followed by pestilence, and the dreadful mortality which ensued probably hastened the termination of hostilities. During his progress homeward, Shah Jehan took possession of several fortresses, and extorted money or an acknowledgment of his supremacy, as well as a promise of tribute, from the princes through whose dominions he passed.

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In following the history of the Mogul empire, an incident which occurred in the reign of Shah Jehan directs attention to an European nation which for a time acted a conspicuous part in India. The governor of Bengal complained to the emperor that he was annoyed by a set of "European idolaters," who had been permitted to establish themselves at Hooghly, for the purposes of trade, but who, instead of adhering strictly to the business of merchants, had fortified themselves, and become so insolent as to commit acts of violence on the subjects of the empire. These "European idolaters" were the Portuguese, to whose extraordinary career of discovery and conquest it will now be proper to advert. The Portuguese, indeed, have made no durable impression on the country, in which they appeared like a brilliant but destructive meteor; but their unwearied exertions to push the arts and discoveries of navigation beyond the limits within which they had been previously restricted, were too beneficial to the world at large to be passed over without notice. Their discoveries received the first impulse from Henry, the fifth son of John, the first king of Portugal of that name. Under his auspices, several expeditions were fitted out for exploring the coast of Africa and the adjacent seas. The first discovery was not very important, but was sufficient to afford encouragement and stimulate to perseverance. It consisted of the little island of Puerto Santo, so named from its having been discovered on the festival of All-Saints. This was in the year 1418. In

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the following year the adventurers were further rewarded by the discovery of Madeira. For more than half a century, the voyages of the Portuguese were continued in the same direction, but in general without more important results than occasional additions to the small stock of geographical knowledge then existing. Little progress seemed to have been made towards the attainment of the grand object of these enterprises, *viz.* the discovery of a new route to India, till the latter end of the fifteenth century, when Bartholomew Dias eclipsed the fame of all preceding navigators, by his success in reaching the southernmost point of Africa, and in doubling the famous promontory called by himself Cabo Tormontoso, the Cape of Storms, but more happily and permanently designated by his sovereign, Cabo de Bona Esperanza, the Cape of Good Hope. Emanuel, the successor of John of Portugal, proceeded in the steps of his predecessor. An expedition was fitted out in furtherance of the object in view, and committed to the care of Vasco de Gama. It sailed from Lisbon on the 9th of July, 1497, doubled the Cape on the 20th of November following, and finally reached Calicut; thus achieving the triumph so long and so anxiously sought. The admiral was forthwith introduced to the native prince, a Hindoo, called by the Portuguese historians Zamorin, by native authorities, Samiri; and after a short stay, marked by alternations of friendliness and hostility, set sail on his return to Portugal, where he was received with the honours which he had so well earned.

The Portuguese returned, and received permission to carry on the operations of commerce. But disputes soon arose, and acts of violence were committed on both sides. The power and influence of the Portuguese, however, continued to extend, and the assistance afforded by them to the neighbouring King of Cochin, in his quarrel with the Zamorin, was rewarded by permission to erect a fort for their protection within the territories of the former prince. Thus was laid the foundation of the Portuguese dominion in the East. An attempt to obtain possession of Calicut failed. Against Goa the invaders were more successful. That city was taken by storm; and although subsequently retaken by a native force, was again captured by the Portuguese, and became the seat of their government, the capital of their Indian dominions, and the see of an archbishop, the primate of the Indies.

The Portuguese were not slow in improving the advantages which they had gained. They claimed the dominion of the Indian seas, extended their commerce into every part of the East, established numerous factories and forts for its management and protection, and waged destructive wars, sometimes in maintaining what they had acquired, sometimes in endeavouring to add to their power.

At Hooghly they appear to have established themselves with their usual views, and they probably exhibited their accustomed insolence and violence. Shah Jehan entertained no affection for them, having, when engaged in rebellion against his father,

CHAP. I. been personally offended by the commander of the Portuguese force at Hooghly. Shah Jehan, whose affairs at that period were far from promising, solicited the aid of the Portuguese troops and artillery, offering in return large promises of favour, to be fulfilled when he should attain the throne of Hindostan. The commander refused, and his refusal was perfectly compatible with the rules of prudence; but he violated those rules by indulging in remarks which could answer no purpose but that of irritating one who might at a future day have the opportunity of revenge. The Portuguese in India had not displayed any rigid attention to the rules of honour and good faith, nor any very decided veneration for the rights of legitimate sovereignty; but on this occasion the melancholy situation of a monarch, assailed by his rebellious child, appears to have roused the virtuous feelings of the Portuguese commander beyond the power of control, and he exclaimed that he should be ashamed of service under a rebel who had wantonly taken up arms against his father and sovereign. The taunt was treasured up, and the complaint of the governor of Hooghly afforded an opportunity of showing that it was not forgotten. The emperor's orders on the occasion were not more brief than decisive.—"Expel these idolaters from my dominions," was the imperial mandate. The Subahdar, to whom it was addressed, lost no time in acting upon it. He proceeded to attack the Portuguese factory, and a practicable breach being effected, the place was carried by assault. The Portuguese defended them-

selves with courage, and after the enemy were in the town, continued to fight under cover of the houses; but being no match for their assailants in point of numbers, they were compelled, after an unsuccessful attempt to make terms, to lay down their arms, and trust to the clemency of the victor. Their fate was better than might have been anticipated, for the conqueror spared their lives, and contented himself with wreaking his wrath on their numerous images, which were forthwith broken down and destroyed. The affair was altogether trivial, and would deserve no notice, but as being the first instance in which the arms of the Mogul were directed against Europeans in the East.

In other quarters Shah Jehan carried on warlike operations upon a larger scale. Professing the opinion that "it is not enough for a great prince to transmit to his posterity the dominions only which he has received from his fathers," he proceeded to manifest a practical adherence to it by taking measures for the subjugation of the Deccan. An immense force was collected and divided into several armies, destined to execute the ambitious orders of the emperor.

Those orders were marked by the most reckless disregard of human suffering; and in their justification the philosophic sovereign was provided with another maxim. "War," said he, "is an evil, and compassion contributes only to render that evil permanent." The weakness of compassion was, therefore, not permitted to intrude upon the operations in the Deccan. The country was delivered

CHAP. I. over to fire, and the people to the sword. One hundred and fifteen towns and castles were taken in the course of a year, and the kings of Beejapoor and Golconda, unable to offer any effective resistance, were compelled to propitiate the emperor by the A.D. 1638. most humiliating submission. They renounced their rank as sovereign princes, and received commissions from the emperor, constituting them hereditary governors of their own dominions. In all their public acts they were to acknowledge the emperor and his successors as lords paramount, and to designate themselves the humble subjects of the Emperor of the Moguls. Tribute, under such circumstances, was not to be forgotten, and large annual payments were stipulated for, the first of them to take place on signing the treaty.

But the Deccan was not to enjoy any long interval of peace. A Persian, named Mir Jumla, who had acquired considerable wealth by trading in diamonds, became a resident at the court of Kootb, sovereign of Golconda, and ultimately obtained the highest command there. In that capacity he had conducted a war of several years' duration in the Carnatic, where he had gathered spoil of immense value. Dissatisfied with his sovereign Kootb, Mir Jumla threw himself upon Aurungzebe, son of Shah Jehan, who then commanded for his father in the Deccan. The desertion of Jumla was followed by the imprisonment of his son, and the confiscation of so much of his wealth as was within reach. Jumla, who had acquired the confidence of

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Aurungzebe, thereupon exerted his influence with the prince to bring about a war with Kootb. Aurungzebe warmly pressed the same views upon the emperor, whose consent to commence hostilities was readily obtained. The command of the expedition was entrusted to Mohammed, Aurungzebe's eldest son. Kootb being wholly unprepared for war, became alarmed, and sought to save himself by concessions, but those which he was prepared to yield fell short of the demands of his invaders. Mohammed thereupon entered Hydrabad, and the scene so often acted under Mahometan conquerors was repeated. Fire and massacre raged through the city, and the activity of the first of these agents disappointed in a great degree the appetite of the conquerors for plunder. So rapid was the progress of the flames, that nothing was saved except such articles as were indestructible even by fire. Similar horrors followed at the old city of Golconda, whither Kootb had retreated, and which was entered by Mohammed shortly after. Kootb was now at the mercy of his conqueror, and it is said that he was only saved from death by the beauty of his daughter, whom, amidst these scenes of blood and slaughter, Mohammed married. A.D. 1656.

The termination of the war afforded the Deccan but a brief period of repose. In the following year the dependent king of Beejapoor died. The vacant throne was filled without reference to the emperor, and the omission of this ceremony was deemed a fit occasion for again consigning the Deccan to the A.D. 1657.

CHAP. I. horrors of war. The command of the invading force was given nominally to Jumla, who had established himself in high favour, but was actually possessed by Aurungzebe. Victory again attended the armies of the emperor. The principal fortresses were, in rapid succession, reduced, and the offending king constrained to sue for peace, at the expense of any sacrifice that the caprice of his conquerors might demand.

The court and empire of Shah Jehan were now about to be agitated by extraordinary events. The atrocious care which Shah Jehan had taken to preserve the throne to his own family, did not secure him in the tranquil occupation of it. He had four sons, named Dara, Shooja, Aurungzebe, and Morad. None of them were destitute of talent, but the third, while he equalled his brothers in natural ability, surpassed them in habitual attention to the promotion of his own aggrandizement, and in that "left-handed wisdom" which has so often elevated its possessors at the expense of more deserving and less unscrupulous persons. Aurungzebe was a man of boundless ambition, and in the gratification of his master-passion evinced an entire freedom from every kind of restraint. The emperor being afflicted with serious illness, the exercise of the government devolved upon Dara. An edict, directing that the seal of Dara should be considered as valid as that of the emperor, had been issued some time before the latter became incapacitated for rule, but until that period Dara made no use of this extraordinary

power. The illness of the emperor, however, accelerated a crisis which had long been in preparation. Dara issued an order, forbidding, under pain of death, all intercourse with his brothers on the existing state of affairs. Their agents at court were imprisoned, their papers seized, and the property in their hands attached. His brothers, on their parts, were not idle. Shooja, the second, was administering the government of Bengal. Aurungzebe was in the Deccan; Morad, in Guzerat. Each on receiving intelligence of his father's illness assigned to himself the crown. Shooja was the first to advance towards the capital. The emperor, however, recovered, and Dara, with a propriety of feeling not common in the East, returned the government into his hands. Shooja's plans were not disconcerted by the change. Affecting to disbelieve the report of the emperor's recovery, he advanced, but it was to his own discomfiture. He was met by a force commanded by Soliman, the son of Dara, and entirely defeated.

Aurungzebe was less precipitate. He paused to make his blow more sure. He levied forces, but not, he professed, to promote any ambitious designs of his own. With characteristic craftiness, he assured his brother Morad, that his own views were directed to heaven, and not to a throne; but Dara, he declared, was unfit for sovereignty, while Shooja was a heretic, and consequently unworthy of the crown. Under these circumstances, he was anxious to assist Morad in ascending the throne, after which he should retire to spend the remainder of his life

CHAP. I. in the exercise of devotion. Morad was entirely deceived by these professions, and a junction of their forces was determined upon. While Aurungzebe was waiting for the arrival of Morad, he learnt that an immense force, under a distinguished Rajpoot commander, had advanced to oppose him. Had Aurungzebe been then attacked, his defeat would have been almost certain; but he was saved by the absurd vanity of the Rajpoot general, who waited for the junction of the brothers, that he might in one day triumph over two imperial princes. That triumph was denied him, for after a long and murderous conflict, he quitted the field a vanquished man, though exhibiting to the last abundant and extravagant proofs of his own contempt of danger.

The result of the battle excited great alarm in the court of Shah Jehan. Shooja, ever since his defeat, had been besieged by Soliman, the son of Dara, in a fortress to which he had retreated; but as the combination of Aurungzebe and Morad seemed likely to afford sufficient occupation to the emperor and his forces, it was deemed expedient to bring the war with Shooja to as speedy a termination as possible. He was accordingly reinstated in the government of Bengal, on giving a solemn promise to abstain from converting his power into the means of attacking his sovereign. The army under Soliman being thus set at liberty, marched to effect a junction with another commanded by Dara, which was advancing against the rebel brothers, Aurungzebe and Morad. Dara had fortified himself about

twenty miles from Agra, in a position from which it was difficult, if not impossible, to dislodge him; but a traitor within the camp suggested to Aurungzebe a circuitous movement towards Agra, which was adopted, the tents, baggage, and artillery of his army being left to deceive their opponents. It was not till the rebels were in full march to Agra, that Dara became aware of the artifice which had been practised. He succeeded, however, in intercepting their progress; but a trial of strength was now inevitable, although it was important to Dara to postpone a battle till the arrival of his son Soliman, who was advancing to join him with the flower of the imperial army. The conflict which took place was obstinate, and the result for a long time doubtful. Ultimately the victory was decided by one of those accidents which have so often determined the fate of armies and of nations. Dara, from some cause, dismounted from an elephant which had borne him throughout the day; and his remaining troops seeing the elephant retreating with the imperial standard, and missing the prince from the situation which he had previously occupied, concluded that he was slain. Dara mounted a horse, but it was only to discover that he was deserted by his followers, who, becoming panic struck by the supposed loss of their general, had precipitately fled. Thus Aurungzebe became master of a field upon which, just before, he had found himself scarcely able to maintain the contest. The army of Aurungzebe had once been saved from imminent destruc-

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tion by the infatuation of the Rajpoot general, in allowing his junction with the army of Morad. The combined forces of the rebel brothers were now, to all appearance, preserved from a similar fate by the inability of Soliman to effect a timely junction with his father Dara.

The next object of Aurungzebe was to obtain possession of the person of his father. A long series of stratagem and counter-stratagem was played between the emperor and his son, who sought his throne. The latter, being the greater artist, ultimately triumphed. Aurungzebe then saluted Morad emperor, and gravely solicited permission to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Morad, who at last began to discern the real views of his hypocritical brother, was not disinclined to be relieved from his presence; and after some feigned reluctance, gave the required consent.

Aurungzebe pretended to make preparations for his journey; it was never commenced; and each of the brothers, lately confederates in crime, and still ostensibly warm friends, turned all his thoughts to the discovery of means for destroying the other. The superior genius of Aurungzebe for intrigue again insured his success. Morad was seized and placed under restraint. The time had now arrived when Aurungzebe thought it safe and expedient to appropriate that prize which he had so long coveted. A body of those convenient friends who are never wanting to the favourites of fortune—who watch the slightest intimation of a desire, and stand obsequi-

ously ready to anticipate the wishes of those on whose favour they live—besought Aurungzebe to crown his possession of imperial power by the assumption of the imperial title. He seemed grieved and almost offended by the proposal, but not to disappoint the wishes of those who loved him, he finally accepted the honour thus thrust upon him, though with as much apparent reluctance as Richard the Third of England showed towards the solicitations of the citizens of London. His ascent to the throne was not marked by any pompous ceremonial, for Aurungzebe affected to despise magnificence, and his contempt for display was, at this time, strengthened by the knowledge that his finances were not in a condition to bear any extraordinary charge.

Shah Jehan and Morad, his youngest son, were now prisoners of Aurungzebe. Dara, the rightful heir to the throne, was flying ingloriously to the boundaries of the empire before the arms of Aurungzebe. Soliman, the son of Dara, having been abandoned by the greater part of his once fine army, found a precarious refuge with the chief of a small state near the source of the Ganges. Shooja, the second son of Shah Jehan, alone remained in a condition to offer any effective resistance to the actual possessor of the throne of Delhi. The rich and populous districts of Bengal afforded ample means for recruiting the loss which Shooja had sustained in his conflict with Soliman. To gain time for the purpose, he had recourse to dissimulation, that never-failing ingredient of Oriental policy. He congratulated Aurung-

CHAP. I. zebe on his attaining the throne, and solicited a commission continuing him in the government of Bengal. Aurungzebe, though he did not grant what was asked, met the overtures of Shooja with great courtesy, and both princes were profuse in professions by which neither was deceived. At length Shooja took the field at the head of a numerous army, and marched on the capital. Having passed Allahabad, he took up a strong position about thirty miles distant from that city, where he awaited the approach of Aurungzebe. That wary general was in no haste, for he did not desire to bring the enemy to action till the arrival of his son Mohammed, who was advancing from the north with reinforcements; but, on receiving this accession of strength, he moved forward with celerity, and the fate of the empire was placed on the issue of a battle. On the first day of the conflict, the evening closed without any decisive advantage on either side. On the following day victory seemed about to crown the arms of Aurungzebe, when an unexpected act of treachery threw his army into confusion.

Jeswunt Singh, the Rajpoot chief whose insane vanity had formerly led to his defeat by the combined forces of Aurungzebe and Morad, had made his peace with the former prince, and on this occasion his troops were arrayed in the cause of the new emperor. He received orders to advance, and he made a show of obeying them; but at a critical moment of the battle, when victory seemed within the grasp of Aurungzebe, and when retreat was ruin, the Rajpoot

commander retired with all his force. To aggravate the effect of his secession, he fell suddenly on the rear of his allies, seizing the baggage and putting to the sword the women, with whom the movements of an eastern army are encumbered. Panic, so easily propagated through an Oriental army, began to take place, and, but for the firmness of Aurungzebe, would soon have decided the question of victory or defeat. He remained seated on an elephant apparently regardless or unconscious of the danger which menaced him. A personal conflict between the brother competitors for the empire was averted by an officer of Aurungzebe, who rushed before that prince, disabling the elephant on which Shooja was mounted, so as to render him unmanageable. The place of Shooja was immediately taken by one of his chiefs, who advanced against Aurungzebe on an elephant, and by the violence of the shock threw that of the emperor on his knees, a position from which the animal was with difficulty recovered. For a moment the firmness of the usurper seemed to desert him. He had one foot placed ready to alight, when he was recalled to a sense of his situation by the emphatic exclamation of an officer—"Stop—you descend from the throne." Aurungzebe regained his place, and the fight continued. His elephant showing a disposition to turn, Aurungzebe ordered his feet to be locked, and in this position the emperor sustained the thickest of the fight. Shooja committed the error which had been fatal to Dara, and from which Aurungzebe was only preserved by the

stern warning of a follower. When his elephant could not be moved forward he descended, and mounted a horse which was brought on the emergency. The appearance of the elephant with the empty castle, gave rise to a report that Shooja had fallen, and flight became universal. Aurungzebe was unable to pursue his victory, but he remained master of the field. In the night, however, his ally, the Rajpoot chief, returned and plundered the camp. This act of aggression was chastised in the morning; but though in the scrambling conflict which ensued fortune went against the Rajah, he was able to carry away his booty. He had the further consolation of a temporary enjoyment of the distinction of a conqueror, for he presented himself before the walls of Agra, and boasted that he had defeated the emperor. The delusion was dissipated by the appearance of Aurungzebe, who entered Agra amid many manifestations of humility and self-denial. His father was within its walls, and on his account, his filial piety silenced the guns which would otherwise have celebrated his entrance. " It was not fit," he said, " to triumph in the ears of a father over the defeat of his son."

Shooja fled in the direction of Bengal, pursued by Mohammed, at the head of a considerable force, against which the former was unable to bear up. Shooja, therefore, continued to retreat, till an extraordinary incident for a time changed the aspect of affairs, and afforded him hope of better fortune. Before the war Mohammed had been enamoured

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of one of the daughters of Shooja. An overture of marriage had been made and accepted, but the breach between the imperial brothers had prevented its being carried into effect. Mohammed's passion seemed to have passed away; but while engaged in pursuing the retreating army of Shooja, he received a letter from the object of his attachment, lamenting the unhappy dissensions between her father and the man who had been destined for her husband. This letter had the effect of reviving the affection of Mohammed in all its former strength. The passions of an Asiatic and a Mahometan are rarely under very strict control, especially at the age of Mohammed, and the love which had been thus rekindled, blazed forth in a manner worthy of the "children of the sun." The prince at once abandoned the cause of his father, and passed over to Shooja. He had calculated on being followed by a large part of his army, but in this he was disappointed. He obtained the hand of her for whom he had sacrificed his position as the heir of Aurungzebe, and the nuptial celebrations were joyous and magnificent; but calamity was approaching with rapid steps, and the ruin of Mohammed followed hard on the indulgence of his passion. The detestable policy of Aurungzebe discovered the means of alienating the affections of Shooja from his son-in-law, and they were employed with his usual precision and success. A letter was addressed by Aurungzebe to Mohammed, apparently in answer to one from the prince to the emperor. The

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letter adverted in terms of mild reproof to the conduct of Mohammed; his alleged professions of repentance were noticed in language of pardon and approbation, and the execution of certain designs, which were only darkly alluded to, was laid down as an indispensable condition of complete forgiveness. The letter was placed by Shooja in the hands of Mohammed, who disavowed having entered into any correspondence with his father; but Shooja could not prevail upon himself to yield belief to his protestations, and he dismissed the prince from his court. No one acquainted with Oriental duplicity will feel much surprise at the distrust of Shooja, who, on this occasion, seems to have acted with great moderation and generosity. Mohammed was in his power, and he believed him faithless. The infliction of perpetual imprisonment, or of summary death, would have been in perfect accordance with the received practice of the East; but Shooja not only suffered Mohammed to depart, and to take with him his wife, but also a vast amount of treasure, with which the munificence of the monarch had endowed his daughter. The banished pair proceeded to the camp, in which, a short time before, Mohammed had held the chief command, but where now, though he was received with the honours due to his rank, the troops by whom he was surrounded were rather his keepers than his guards. He was placed in confinement at Gwalior, and whether he was ever permitted to emerge from his prison-house appears doubtful. But it is certain that he never

again attained any portion of power, and that he died in obscurity and neglect.

Shooja, who since the fatal conflict with the army of Aurungzebe had been constantly retreating, was at last compelled to quit his own dominions and seek safety in Arracan; but even there he was still pursued by the machinations of his implacable brother. Shooja had carried with him considerable treasure, and this added to his danger, by exciting the cupidity of the Rajah with whom he had sought refuge. A pretext for violence was readily found, and under the combined influence of avarice and fear, Shooja and his two sons were murdered. His wife destroyed herself, and two of his daughters followed her example. A third was forced into a marriage with the Rajah, but survived the closing calamities of her house but a short time.

Dara, after his defeat, wandered for a time in various directions, apparently without any fixed purpose. In Guzerat he, after a time, obtained assistance, which enabled him again to place himself at the head of an army; and having opened a correspondence with Jeswunt Singh, the Hindoo Rajah, who, notwithstanding his recent treachery, appears to have obtained the emperor's pardon, and to have been left in possession of his power, that person intimated his intention of deserting Aurungzebe in the hour of danger, and urged Dara to hasten and support his defection. Dara's evil fortune or want of judgment on this, as on so many other occasions, prevailed. He waited to augment his forces, and

Aurungzebe, having overcome Shooja, was left at leisure to direct his armies against his elder brother.

Dara had fortified himself in a strong position near Ajmere. To dislodge him was a difficult, if not an impracticable task, and Aurungzebe, as usual, thought treachery a better weapon than those upon which more high-minded warriors depend. Two chiefs, who had previously been adherents of Dara, now held commands in the army of Aurungzebe. At the suggestion of that prince, they addressed a letter to Dara, offering to renew their former allegiance to him, and promising to march over to his camp at sunrise the next morning. Dara was warned not to trust to this overture, but the warning was vain. He ordered that admission should be given to the expected deserters, and at the appointed time they commenced the anticipated movement. To countenance the delusion the artillery of Aurungzebe opened a fire upon them, but with powder only. On reaching the entrance to the camp the mask was thrown off—somewhat earlier perhaps than was intended, in consequence of the suspicions of one of Dara's officers, who required the strangers to stop till he should be satisfied of their real designs. The unwelcome challenge was answered by an arrow which pierced the heart of the cautious officer, and a contest hand to hand then commenced. The assailants gained the summit of a mountain at the back of Dara's camp, and from this elevation cast down stones and fragments of rock upon their enemies beneath, while Aurungzebe, with his whole

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line, advanced in the front. Confusion raged throughout the camp, and panic, that mighty conqueror of armed hosts, did its work. Dara's loss is said to have amounted to four thousand, while that of Aurungzebe did not exceed two hundred.

Dara was once more a wanderer without a resting place, and for a time was subjected to almost inconceivable distress. He meditated escaping into Persia, but the severe illness of his wife, which rendered her removal impossible, and his reliance upon the friendship of a chief whom he had twice saved from death when judicially condemned, delayed his purpose. The sultana died, and Dara proposed to carry into execution his contemplated flight into Persia. After proceeding a short distance, he perceived the obliged and grateful chief, with whom he had lately sojourned,* following him at the head of a large body of horse. Dara at first supposed that this was an escort of honour; but he was soon undeceived by finding himself surrounded, disarmed, and bound. He was thus carried to Delhi, and after being paraded ignominiously through the city, was thrown into prison. There, after a brief interval, he was murdered. It is not undeserving of mention that the treacherous chief, who had delivered his benefactor to captivity and death, did not lose his just reward. Having narrowly escaped death from the indignation of the people at the gates of Delhi, when returning from his atrocious errand, he was less fortunate on approaching his

* Or, according to some accounts, his brother.

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The occurrence of these events was anterior to the death of Shooja, which has been already noticed. Soliman, the son of Dara, had for a time found an asylum with the Rajah of Serinaghur. But the Rajah had his price, and Aurungzebe was willing to pay it. Soliman, aware of the negotiation, endeavoured to escape the fate prepared for him by flight to the northward; but losing his way in the mountainous country, he fell into the hands of his betrayer, by whom he was forthwith transferred to the tender care of Aurungzebe.

The course of events relieved Aurungzebe from another source of disquiet. After an imprisonment
A.D. 1666. of more than seven years, his father died, thus leaving the usurper without a competitor. From the age which Shah Jehan had attained, his death could not be regarded as a remarkable event; but the character of his son was such as to countenance suspicion that nature had not been left entirely to perform her own work.

Aurungzebe was now the undisputed master of a vast empire; but a new power was rising in the Deccan, which was destined to occupy a prominent place in the history of India. The Mahrattas consisted of several tribes of mountaineers, whose origin and early history partake of that obscurity which hangs over Hindoo antiquity. At this period they were brought into notice by the appearance among them of one of those remarkable men, whose ambi-

tion and success astonish and afflict the world. The name of this Mahratta leader was Sevajee. His father, named Shahjee, had been a successful adventurer, who, though of humble origin, had played an important part in the intrigues and wars of the Deccan.* Sevajee was born amid the storms of war, and during his childhood was frequently in danger of falling into the hands of enemies. Under these circumstances, his education comprehended little more than instruction in horsemanship, and in the use of the various weapons employed in the Deccan, in which accomplishments he acquired considerable skill and activity; but he imbibed at the same time a deep attachment to his native superstitions, and a determined hatred of the Mahometans. His chosen associates were persons of wild and lawless habits, and scandal attributed to him participation in the profits of gang robbers. But his ambition soon aimed at higher objects. The unsettled state of the country favoured his views, and his operations were so cautiously conducted as to attract little notice, till he had possessed himself of a considerable territory, and presented an appearance sufficiently formidable to control the jealousy of his neighbours. When Aurungzebe entered the Deccan, he opened a correspondence with Sevajee, but both were such perfect masters of every description of political intrigue, that neither succeeded in gaining any advantage. Sevajee continued

* The facts relating to the Mahrattas are given on the authority of Duff's History of the Mahrattas.

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to pursue his own objects by his own means until the government of Beejapoor deemed it necessary to make an active effort to subdue him. An expedition was despatched for the purpose, but Sevajee disposed of its commander in a manner perfectly characteristic. He affected alarm, and proposed submission. A Brahmin, in the service of his Mahometan enemy, was accordingly despatched to confer with him. To this person Sevajee enlarged on his own devotion to the Hindoo faith, on the exertions he had made in its cause, and those which he still meditated; the effect of these topics on the Brahmin being aided by large presents, and still larger promises. By the united influence of these motives, the pious Brahmin was so overcome as to be induced to suggest a plan for getting rid of his employer. This was eagerly embraced by Sevajee, and the conference broke up. The desired object was to be effected by prevailing upon Afzool Khan, the Mahometan general, to afford Sevajee an interview, each to be attended by only a single follower; and the worthy Brahmin found little difficulty in betraying his master into the snare. At the appointed time Sevajee prepared himself for the holy work which he was about to execute by the ceremonies of religion and the solace of maternal approbation. He performed his ablutions with peculiar care, and laying his head at his mother's feet, besought her blessing. Thus morally armed for the conflict, he did not, however, neglect to provide himself with the more substantial requisites of success and safety.

To appearance his covering was only a turban and a cotton gown, but beneath he wore a steel-chain cap and steel armour. Within his right sleeve he placed a crooked dagger, called in the language of the country, a scorpion; and on the fingers of his left hand a treacherous weapon called a tiger's claw, which consists of three crooked blades of small dimensions, the whole being easily concealed in a half-closed hand. Thus accoutred, he slowly advanced to the place of meeting. The Khan had arrived before him, and Sevajee, as he approached, frequently stopped, as though under the influence of alarm. To assure him, the armed attendant of the Mahometan general was, by the contrivance of the friendly Brahmin, removed to a few paces distant from his master, and the latter approaching Sevajee, the conference commenced by the ordinary ceremonial of an embrace. The Mahratta prepared to make the most of his opportunity, and struck the tiger's claw into the body of the Khan, following the blow by another from his dagger. The Khan drew his sword and made a cut at his assassin, but it fell harmless upon the concealed armour. Sevajee's follower rushed to his support, and a preconcerted signal being given, a body of troops attacked those of his adversary, who had been stationed at a little distance, and who, being unprepared for such an attack, found themselves exposed to an enemy before they could stand to their arms. The victory enriched Sevajee with a vast amount of plunder, but this was little compared with the accession of reputation

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which he owed to it; the perpetration of successful treachery being, in Mahratta estimation, the highest exercise of human genius.

Sevajee was not always equally fortunate, and a succession of disasters at length compelled him to tender his submission to Aurungzebe. It was graciously received, and Sevajee was invited to Delhi; the invitation being accompanied by a promise, by no means unnecessary, of permission to return to the Deccan. Upon the faith of this he proceeded to Delhi, but his reception was unsatisfactory, and having expressed some indignation, it was intimated that the emperor for the future declined seeing him at court. He was subsequently placed under some degree of restraint, but he succeeded in outwitting his keepers and effecting his escape.

Sevajee now applied himself with his usual energy to the task of more effectually establishing his power and influence. By a series of intrigues he procured from Aurungzebe a recognition of his title of Rajah, and various favours for his son; and he availed himself of the opportunity afforded by a period of comparative leisure to revise and complete the internal arrangements of his government. His inactivity seemed to favour the belief that he was satisfied with what he possessed, and would now settle down into a quiet dependent of the Mogul Emperor. Those, however, who entertained this belief were deceived. His warlike habits were soon resumed; several important places were taken, and Surat, which he had plundered some years before,

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was again subjected to the same operation. On this, as on the former occasion, the inmates of the English factory defended themselves with a spirit worthy of their national character. The Dutch were not attacked, their factory being beyond the scene of action. The French purchased an ignominious immunity, by giving the Mahrattas a passage through their factory to attack a Tartar prince returning from Mecca with a vast treasure of gold and silver, and other valuable articles. In addition to his land force, Sevajee fitted out a powerful fleet, calculated either to co-operate with his troops by land, or to add to his wealth by successful piracy; and being thus prepared to support his intention, he resolved to content himself no longer with exercising the functions of sovereignty, but determined to assume the style of an independent prince, and to establish an era from the date of his ascending the throne. He was enthroned with all the reverence which superstition could lend to the ceremony, and assumed titles not inferior in swollen grandeur to those borne by other Eastern potentates. The addition of dignity which he thereby gained made no change in his habits. He continued his predatory system of warfare, from which the kingdoms of Beejapoor and Golconda were the chief sufferers. His death took place in the fifty-third year of his age. At the time of A.D. 1680. its occurrence he possessed a tolerably compact territory of considerable extent, besides many detached places, and his personal wealth was immense. He was succeeded by his son Sumbhajee, after an unsuccess-

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ful attempt to place on the throne another son named Raja Ram.

It will now be proper to return to Aurungzebe. Aided by the Portuguese, who were easily bribed by the promise of commercial advantages, the emperor's deputy in Bengal waged war with the Rajah of Arracan, and added Chittagong to the imperial dominions. On the other side, the empire was placed in some danger from a misunderstanding with the court of Persia; but this was adjusted by the mediation of Jehanara, sister of the emperor, a woman of extraordinary talent and address. A revolt of the Patans took place, a private soldier who happened to bear a strong resemblance to Shooja, the deceased brother of the emperor, being placed at its head, and imperial honours paid him. This was suppressed, and after the lapse of some time, confidence having been restored between the Patan chiefs and the emperor's representative at Peshawar, that officer invited the supporters of the pretender to a festival, where, having intoxicated them with drugged wine, he caused them all to be murdered, a sufficient force having been procured to master their retinues. Aurungzebe on this occasion acted with characteristic hypocrisy, in which nature and long practice had made him a complete adept. He publicly reprobated the atrocity of the act, but privately assured the wretch by whom it had been perpetrated of his favour.*

With the Rajpoot states, the hypocrisy of Aurung-

* Orme's Historical Fragments, page 68.

zebe found another mode of exercise. Conversion to the Mahometan faith was proposed to their acceptance, and the alternative was submission to an oppressive capitation tax. To prepare the way for the designs of Aurungzebe, two Rajpoot princes are said to have been taken off by poison,* and a treacherous attempt to subject the children of one of them to the initiatory rite of Mahometanism was defeated only by the desperate valour of their guards.† In the war which ensued Aurungzebe gained little either of honour or advantage, and his fourth son Akbar, while engaged in it, was tempted by the offer of the aid of the Rajpoots to raise the standard of rebellion against his father. Aurungzebe took the same course by which he had ruined his son Mohammed with Shooja. He addressed a letter to Akbar, applauding a pretended scheme by which that prince was to fall upon the Rajpoots when attacked by the emperor. This, as was designed, fell into the hands of the Rajpoot commander, and Akbar was consequently believed to have betrayed his allies.‡ Having thus become an object of enmity with both parties in the war, his only chance of safety was in flight, and he sought refuge with Sumbhajee, by whom he was received with extraordinary distinction.

A.D. 1684.

Aurungzebe now turned his attention towards the Deccan, and prepared to prosecute his views there

* Todd's Annals of Rajast'han, vol. i. page 379.

† Aurungzebe's Operations in the Deccan, by Scott, page 53.

‡ Todd's Annals, vol. i. page 386.

CHAP. I. with vigour. He proceeded thither in person, with an immense force. His eldest son, Shah Allum, was ordered with an army to the Concan, to reduce the Mahratta fortresses on the sea coast; but the ravages of pestilence so thinned his ranks, that he was compelled to return without effecting any thing, and with only the wreck of his army.* In other quarters the emperor's arms were more successful. Beejapoor, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, fell to him. The fate of Golconda was more protracted. The king, after sacrificing every article of value, even to the ornaments of the women of his harem, in the vain hope of propitiating his invader, retired to the citadel of his capital, and there sustained a seven months' siege. Aurungzebe ultimately triumphed by the use of those means of conquest which were so consonant to the constitution of his mind. A powerful chief and favourite of the king of Golconda, who had been most active in the defence of the place, was gained over by bribes and promises to admit, in the night, a body of Mogul troops.† Golconda thus changed its master, and its former sovereign ended his days in prison at Dowlatabad.

A.D. 1686.

Another triumph awaited Aurungzebe. The Mahratta power had declined in the hands of Sumbhajee, who was abandoned to sensual indulgence. A plan to obtain possession of the person of this prince was laid and executed with success. Life was offered him, on condition of his embracing the Mahometan

* Scott's History, pp. 59, 62, 63. † Ibid. page 74.

creed, but he replied by abuse of the Prophet; and after being subjected to dreadful tortures, he was publicly beheaded in the camp bazaar. Raigurh, the seat of the Mahratta government, subsequently fell, and, as usual, its fall was aided by corruption.

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A.D. 1689.

But the Mahratta, though crippled, was not destroyed. The brother of Sumbhajee was placed on the throne, and all the forms of government maintained. Sattara became the residence of the Rajah, and the principal seat of the Mahratta power. In a few years a greater force was in the field than Sevajee had ever commanded, and tribute was levied according to approved precedent. The emperor, however, appeared unexpectedly before Sattara, which being inadequately provisioned for a siege, fell into his hands, though not without occasioning him severe loss. From some error in the construction of a mine, it exploded in a direction not contemplated, and it is said that two thousand of the besiegers were destroyed by the accident. A month before this event, the Mahratta sovereign had died from the consequences of over-exertion. He was succeeded by his eldest son, a boy only ten years of age.

A child on such a throne as that of the Mahrattas, with his mother for a guardian, would seem to have little chance of success when opposed by a warrior so experienced, and a negotiator so unprincipled as Aurungzebe. The Mahrattas, however, continued to prosper; and though Aurungzebe, by a series of sieges which occupied several years, suc-

CHAP. I. ceeded in gaining possession of many strong fortresses, not only were his efforts to crush the enemy abortive, but the vast army which he maintained was insufficient even to support his authority. His embarrassments were aggravated by the difficulty of procuring the means of subsisting so large a force. A scarcity of grain arose, and the supplies of the imperial army from Hindostan were intercepted by the Mahrattas, who everywhere ravaged the country in search of plunder. The grand army itself was attacked on its route to Ahmednuggur, a part of it defeated, and its baggage plundered. The person of the emperor might perhaps have fallen into the hands of the Mahrattas on this occasion had they ventured to persevere in the attack, but on the approach of the emperor's train the enemy retired, "as if," says the native historian, "struck with awe at the tremendous aspect of majesty." This forbearance, the same authority declares, "was at this period the greatest good fortune."* The great age of Aurungzebe probably saved him from the mortification of beholding a large portion of his conquests severed from the empire which he had so laboured to extend. But his earthly career was approaching its termination, and the close of his life found a fitting scene amid the turbulence, desolation, and

A.D. 1707. suffering, which raged around him. He died in 1707, after a reign of nearly half a century, and at the patriarchal age of ninety-four.

* Scott, History of Aurungzebe's Operations in the Deccan, page 120.

The ruling passion of Aurungzebe was the love of dominion, and he subjected it to no restraint from the obligations of morality. He was a consummate hypocrite, ever ready to cover the most guilty designs with pretences of devotion and religious zeal. He is said to have made good laws, and to have enforced them with vigour, at the same time that the administration of the empire was mild and equitable; but though his dominions may not have been in all respects so badly governed as those of some other Oriental despots, the general tenor of his life evinces an utter disregard of all the principles of justice, and a total insensibility to the kind and generous emotions of nature. It may be that he rarely committed a crime which he did not believe necessary to the furtherance of his purposes, but no moral obstacle was ever suffered to impede them. He manifested a preference indeed for certain modes of obtaining any object of desire, but those modes were the meanest and the most vile. Craft and fraud were his favourite instruments, and his long life was an unbroken chain of deceit and treachery. A superficial observer of his character will condemn his bigotry; a more profound one will probably acquit him of this charge, but it will be only to pass a severer sentence on his atrocious hypocrisy. Where there is so little to relieve the moral darkness of the picture, it is neither instructive nor agreeable long to dwell upon it; and as the progress of the state is here more strictly the subject of attention than the character of its head, it will be sufficient to ob-

CHAP. I. serve that, under Aurungzebe, the Mogul empire attained its widest boundaries, as well as the summit of its prosperity and splendour.

The death of Aurungzebe was followed by a contest for the succession. It ended in the elevation of his eldest son, Shah Allum, to the throne, which he occupied only five years. Several weak princes followed in rapid succession, whose brief and inglorious reigns may be passed without notice. The terrible visitation which marked that of Mohammed Shah, entitles it to be excepted from oblivion. Nadir Shah, a native of Khorassan, and the son of a maker of sheepskin-coats and caps, had renounced the peaceful occupation of his father for that of a robber chief, and finally seated himself on the Persian throne.* Nadir being engaged in war with the Afghans, had reason, or pretended that he had reason, to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the court of Delhi in relation to his enemies. The murder of an envoy furnished him with a less equivocal pretext for hostilities; and he advanced to inflict punishment with that vigour and celerity which ever distinguished his movements.
A.D. 1739. On the plain of Kamal, about four days' journey from Delhi, he fell suddenly upon the unsuspecting forces of the emperor, and quickly putting them to flight removed every obstacle to his advance to the capital, the gates of which were thrown open to receive him. For two days after the entry of the

* The relation of the events connected with the invasion of Nadir Shah rests principally on the authority of Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia, and Scott's History of Aurungzebe's Successors.

Persian, peace and order prevailed; but a report of the death of Nadir Shah having been raised, the inhabitants, under cover of the night, rose upon the invaders, and the city became a scene of tumult and violence. Nadir Shah made some efforts to undeceive the people, but to no purpose. The light of the morning, however, discovered the falsehood of the report which led to the popular outbreak, by showing Nadir Shah in person, giving orders to his troops to slaughter, without regard to sex or age, the inhabitants of every street or avenue in which they should find the body of a murdered Persian. These orders were fearfully executed, and eight thousand Hindoos, Moguls, and Afghans perished in a few hours. Pillage accompanied bloodshed, and the horrors of the scene were aggravated by the flames which rose from every quarter of the capital. The appetite of the destroyer was at length satisfied, and an order given to stay the carnage.

But Nadir Shah had no intention of allowing Delhi to escape with this limited experience of the effects of successful invasion. He proceeded to seize the imperial treasures, represented as being of vast amount. The property of the subjects was not permitted to enjoy an immunity denied to that of the sovereign; contributions were demanded and levied with rigid severity. Among a people with whom avarice is so strong a passion, there were, of course, many attempts to conceal the possession of wealth; where this was suspected, torture was used to enforce a discovery. Famine and pestilence followed closely

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on the devastation of the city, and assisted in completing the horrors of a scene from which numbers escaped by becoming their own destroyers.

Nadir Shah did not exercise the power which he certainly possessed of putting an end to the Mogul sovereignty, but contented himself with annexing to his own dominions the provinces on the west side of the Indus, permitting Mohammed to keep the rest, in consideration, as he stated in a letter to his son, of the high birth of the conquered prince, his descent from the house of Gaurgáni, and his affinity to the Persian sovereign by virtue of his Turkomanian origin. The conqueror then withdrew from Delhi, having retained possession of it not quite two months. In that space, however, a fatal blow had been struck at the grandeur of the Mogul empire.

That empire was indeed fast tending to its close. The Deccan can scarcely be considered as forming a portion of it after the death of Aurungzebe. Many years before the Persian invasion, a powerful chief had been appointed governor of that region, with the imposing title of Nizam-ool-Moolk, Regulator of the State. Though nominally the servant of the emperor, his object from the first was to establish himself as an independent sovereign, and he succeeded. In the subsequent history of India, the Nizam will be found occupying a prominent place among the Mahometan princes of that country. Another important limb was severed from the Mogul empire soon after the visit of Nadir Shah; the sovereignty of Bengal being seized by one of those speculators

in thrones, to whose hopes the unsettled state of the country afforded encouragement. The government of Oude was usurped by another. On the western side, some of its provinces fell to the Afghans, who penetrated to the heart of the empire, and plundered its capital. The Seiks, a sect of semi-religious, semi-political adventurers, profited also from the distracted state of the country in this quarter. In others, the Jâts and the Rohillas contributed to relieve the Mogul princes from the toils of government; while the Mahrattas, amidst these convulsions, were not unmindful of the opportunity of obtaining accessions of territory, power, and influence. A portion of the public revenue, which in their plundering expeditions they had originally levied as the price of peace, was now, by the weakness of the Mogul state, ceded to them as of right. The entire surface of India was studded with their possessions, which extending eastward, westward, and southward, to the sea, and northward to Agra, wanted nothing but compactness to constitute them a mighty empire. During the reign of a weak successor of the energetic founder of the Mahratta power, all authority was usurped by the principal officers of the state. Two powerful kingdoms were thus formed, the one under the Peishwa, whose capital was at Poona; the other subject to the commander-in-chief, who fixed the seat of his government at Nagpore. The latter acknowledged a nominal dependence upon the former, and both mocked the Rajah of Sattara with ceremonious but empty homage, while they withheld

CHAP. I. from him all substantial authority. Other Mahratta chieftains of inferior importance also assumed sovereign power, the principal of whom, with the title of Guicowar, held part of Guzerat in a sort of feudal dependence upon the Peishwa, and fixed his residence at Baroda.

Such was the state of India about the middle of the eighteenth century, when a new power was to enter the field of Indian politics, and the foundations of a new empire were about to be laid.

CHAPTER II.

THROUGHOUT the early part of the eighteenth century the Mogul empire was in a state of dissolution. The commercial supremacy of the Portuguese had yielded to that of the Dutch, which latter in its turn had begun to manifest unequivocal symptoms of decline. Two other European nations were preparing to contend for the power and influence which were ready to pass out of the hands of those too feeble to retain it, and the enmity of centuries was to find a new field for its development in an Indian war between the English and the French. CHAP. II.

The first appearance of the English in India gave no promise of their future grandeur. The London East India Company, established solely for the purposes of trade, was incorporated towards the latter end of the reign of Elizabeth. Bantam, in Java, for the trade of the Indian Islands, and Surat, for that of the Continent, were long their principal stations. On the Coromandel coast they first established themselves at Masulipatam, subsequently at Armegum, and finally at Madraspatam, where, by the favour of a native prince, they obtained permission to erect a fortification, which received the name of Fort St. George. Tegnapatam, on the same coast,

CHAP. II. which was purchased from another native prince, was, in like manner, fortified, and became a station of some importance under the name of Fort St. David. On the opposite coast the island of Bombay, which had been ceded to the British crown as part of the marriage portion of Catherine of Portugal, Queen of Charles the Second, was, by that sovereign, granted to the Company, and in process of time it superseded Surat as their principal station on the western coast. In Bengal their progress was slow and subject to frequent checks. They, however, succeeded in establishing various factories, of which that of Hooghly was the chief, but for the most part they were dependent on Fort St. George. In the year 1700, the villages of Chuttanuttee, Govindpore, and Calcutta, having been obtained by means of a large present to Azim, grandson of Aurungzebe, the new acquisitions were declared a presidency. They were forthwith fortified, and in compliment to the reigning sovereign of England, the settlement received the name of Fort William. Thus was the foundation laid of the future capital of British India.

Among the projects resorted to for supporting the government of William the Third, was that of establishing a new East India Company, the capital of which was to be lent to the crown. This, though a violation of the rights of the old Company, was carried into effect. The new corporation commenced trade under the title of the English East India Company, and a struggle between the two bodies was

carried on for several years. A compromise at length took place. The old Company surrendered its charter to the crown, and its members were received into the new corporation, which thenceforth, until the year 1833, bore the title of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies.

For nearly forty years after this union of the Companies, the history of the British connection with India presents nothing but a detail of the operations of trade, varied only by the efforts of the United Company to obtain protection from native princes, to exclude those who sought to invade their privileges, and to regulate the conduct of their servants. So humble were the views of the Company, and so little resemblance did its chief servant bear to a Governor-general in later times, that the outlay of little more than a hundred pounds in the purchase of a chaise and a pair of horses for the President at Calcutta, was regarded as a reprehensible piece of extravagance, and the amount ordered to be repaid; the Court of Directors observing, that if their servants would have "such superfluities," they must pay for them.*

Late in the year 1744, war was declared between France and England, and soon after the declaration, a British fleet was despatched to India, which, after cruising with some success, appeared off the coast of Coromandel threatening Pondicherry. In consequence, however, of the intervention of the Nabob of the Carnatic and the fears of the British govern-

* Letter to Bengal, 7th January, 1725.

CHAP. II. ment of Madras, it retired without effecting or even attempting any thing against the French settlement. The appearance of a British fleet in the Indian seas was soon followed by that of a French squadron, commanded by La Bourdonnais, a man whose name is eminent in the history of the brief and inglorious career of his countrymen in the East. After some encounters of no great importance, but in which the English had the advantage, the French fleet attacked the British settlement of Madras. As the nabob had interfered to protect the French possession of Pondicherry from the English, and had assured the latter that he would in like manner enforce the neutrality of the French, application was made for the fulfilment of his promise; but it was not accompanied by that species of advocacy which is requisite to the success of Oriental diplomacy, and it was, consequently, disregarded. The result was disastrous; the town was forced to capitulate, the goods of the Company, part of the military stores and all the naval stores, were confiscated, and a treaty was signed pledging the British to further payments, in consideration of the evacuation of the town. The period, however, for performing this stipulation was extended, in consequence of the intrigues of Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry, who claimed, in virtue of that office, supreme authority over all the French possessions in India. This man, in whose character ambition, vanity, and duplicity reigned in a degree which makes it impossible to determine which predominated, had promised

possession of Madras to the nabob—that prince, when he was perfectly aware that his interference could be of no avail, having thought fit to express his displeasure at the conduct of the French. But the nabob, estimating the promises of Dupleix at their real value, resolved not to trust to them, but to endeavour to secure by arms that which there was little hope of securing in any other manner. He made the attempt at the expense of about seventy men killed, and was compelled to retire to St. Thomè, about four miles distant from Madras, the French not losing a man. In the new position to which he had retreated, the same ill-fortune attended him, for, being attacked by the French, he was totally defeated, and forced to retire to Arcot. This was a severe lesson to the presumptuous confidence of the nabob, who had calculated upon finding Madras an easy conquest. A cotemporary historian* observes that, measuring the military abilities of the Europeans by the great respect and humility with which they had hitherto carried themselves in all their transactions with the Mogul government, he imagined that this submission in their behaviour proceeded from a consciousness of the superior military prowess of the Moors, by which name the Mahometans were then understood.

The success of the French was followed by an act of atrocious perfidy towards their European opponents. The treaty concluded by La Bourdonnais was declared null; the property of the English,

* Orme, on whose authority these events are related.

CHAP. II. excepting a few personal articles of trifling value, was seized, and those who refused to swear allegiance to the French king were required to depart from Madras within four days. The governor and principal inhabitants were marched under an escort to Pondicherry, where they were paraded in procession to grace the triumph of Dupleix.

On the authorities of Madras becoming prisoners to the French, the Company's agents at Fort St. David assumed the general administration of British affairs in that part of India. Against this place Dupleix directed the arms of the French, but the aid of the nabob had now been secured by the English, partly by the desire which he entertained of revenging his defeat, partly by virtue of an engagement to defray a portion of the expense of his army; and thus assisted, the English were able to repel the attacks made upon them. The appearance of a British fleet also added to their confidence and security. Thus foiled, Dupleix had recourse to those arts of intrigue in which he was a proficient, and by them succeeded in detaching the nabob from his European allies. He was still, however, unable to possess himself of Fort St. David, and the arrival of an additional naval force under Admiral Boscawen emboldened the English to undertake an attack upon Pondicherry. This, however, failed, no less signally than the attempts of Dupleix upon Fort St. David. The information of the assailants was imperfect and erroneous; the engineers were unequal to their duty; in some instances even the

want of courage was as manifest as the want of conduct, and the British force returned from Pondicherry with the loss of more than a thousand men. The peace of Aix la Chapelle restored Madras to the English, who resumed possession in August, 1749. St. Thomè, from its vicinity to Madras, afforded its inhabitants the means of acquiring information of the transactions of the English, and these means had been employed much to the advantage of the enemy. The place had formerly belonged to the Nabob of Arcot, but for some time neither civil nor military authority existed within it, and it seemed to belong to no one. Dupleix wished to claim it for the French; and the only question being whether it should be garrisoned by them or their European rivals, Admiral Boscawen promptly and properly determined this point by taking possession of it on the part of the English.

Humble as was yet the position occupied by our countrymen in India, there were not wanting indications of an approaching change in their relations to the people of the country. Instead of seeking protection from the native authorities, they began to be regarded as in a condition to extend it. Prior to the restoration of Madras, a Mahratta prince had presented himself at Fort St. David to solicit their assistance in regaining the throne of Tanjore from which he had been expelled. On the merits of his claim to the throne it will be unnecessary to dwell, as it is clear that, assuming his claim to be well-founded, the English were under no obligation

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to render him any assistance; and had he urged nothing but the validity of his title, it is not probable that his application would have succeeded. Of this he appears to have been aware, and accordingly he sought the favour of those whom he addressed by associating his restoration with prospective advantages to the English Company. This, it is to be inferred, was the motive which rendered the English authorities so anxious that the rightful succession to the throne of Tanjore should not be invaded.* The fugitive prince promised

* Although it cannot be believed that the British authorities were much moved by the circumstance, there seems reason to conclude that the excluded prince was really the lawful inheritor of the throne, as far as lawful succession can be regarded as applying to a government which had its origin in a very recent usurpation. Tanjore had been overrun by Shahjee, the father of Sevajee, the great Mahratta leader, and the possession of it had passed to a son of the former chief, and a brother of the latter, named Venkajee. Venkajee had three sons, but the two elder of them were childless. Tookajee, the youngest, was the father of two sons, one legitimate, named Syajee, the other alleged to be illegitimate, named Pertaub Singh. Syajee succeeded to the throne, but his exercise of authority was but nominal. He was held in the trammels of a powerful and ambitious Mahometan officer, who, after a time, thought fit to deprive his master of the name as well as the power of a sovereign. Syajee, the prince who subsequently sought the assistance of the English, was removed from the throne, and Pertaub Singh elevated in his place. This is the account given by Captain Duff (History of Mahratta, vol. i. p. 566), but it should be mentioned that Orme gives a different statement, from which it would appear that the title to the succession was involved in much greater obscurity than from Captain Duff's account seems to have been the case. The very minute attention which Captain Duff had given to Mahratta history, renders it probable that his relation is the true one.

that the fort and territory of Devi Cottah should be the reward of placing him on the throne, and to remove any doubts of the practicability of effecting his restoration, he declared that, if supported by a moderate force, the people would rise in his behalf. On the faith of these representations, the British authorities despatched an expedition against Tanjore, but the expected assistance from the people of that country was not forthcoming; and after encountering some difficulties and disasters, the British troops returned to Fort St. David. The government, however, resolved upon making a second attempt, although it was apparent that no hope of assistance from the population of Tanjore could be entertained. It was thought dangerous to continue under the reproach of defeat, and further, a strong desire existed to obtain possession of Devi Cottah, on account of its presumed commercial advantages. A new expedition was fitted out, and Devi Cottah was taken. With this acquisition the war terminated, the reigning sovereign of Tanjore consenting to confirm the English in the possession of it, and to make a small provision for the support of his rival; the English, on their part, engaging for his peaceable behaviour. These terms, it was believed, were more favourable to the invaders than could have been obtained but for the extraordinary circumstances of the Carnatic.

The Rajah of Trichinopoly had died without issue, in the year 1732. Three wives survived him, the second and third of whom duteously devoted themselves to death on his funeral pile. The first,

CHAP. II. either from a dislike to this mode of quitting life, or, as was alleged, in obedience to the wish of the departed Rajah conveniently communicated to his confidential minister, preferred to live and to succeed to the government. The commander-in-chief of the forces raised a party in opposition to her pretensions, and to resist him the queen sought the assistance of the Nabob of Arcot. It was readily given; and an army was despatched by that prince to Trichinopoly, under the command of his son, who was aided by the counsels of a man named Chunda Sahib. This person, who was allied to his sovereign by marriage, possessed considerable ability and not less ambition. By the successful exercise of the former, he had found means to gratify the latter, having raised himself by a series of successful measures, first to the actual administration of the government, and, finally, to the attainment of the formal appointment of Dewan. In seeking the assistance of the nabob and his ambitious minister, the queen was not insensible of the danger which she incurred, and the foreign troops were not admitted into the fort until the good intentions of their leaders were vouched to all appearance by the most solemn obligation that can bind the conscience of a Mussulman. Chunda Sahib tendered his oath upon the Koran as the guarantee that the troops should be introduced for no other purpose than the confirmation of the queen's authority, after which they should be faithfully withdrawn; but the oath was actually taken, not upon the Koran, but on a brick wrapped

in a covering similar to that in which the sacred book of the Mahometans is usually enveloped, and Chunda Sahib felt his conscience free. He exercised his freedom to the full extent, by putting an end to the authority of the queen, imprisoning her person, and hoisting on the wall of the fort the flag of Islam. Chunda Sahib having achieved this conquest, was thought the fittest person to administer its government under the authority of his master. This appointment excited jealousy and alarm in the minds of some of the advisers of the Nabob of Arcot, and they endeavoured to communicate to that prince a portion of their feelings. Failing in this, they commenced a series of intrigues with the Mahrattas, the object of which was the removal of Chunda Sahib. It would be tedious to dwell upon the infatuated and tortuous policy by which the removal of a dangerous servant was sought. It will be sufficient to observe, that after, according to their usual practice, playing their own game at the expense of all other parties, the Mahrattas succeeded in reducing Chunda Sahib, who, with his eldest son, was made prisoner and marched to Sattara. A Mahratta governor took his place, and a large extent of country thus fell under the power of that people.* A. D. 1741.

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The wife and younger son of Chunda Sahib took refuge at Pondicherry. There they were treated with great respect by Dupleix, the governor, who designed to make Chunda Sahib an instrument of advancing the French interests in India. A corre-

* Wilks's Historical Sketches of the South of India, chap. vii.

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spondence with the prisoner of the Mahrattas was opened, and the French governor had the satisfaction of ascertaining that he was not indisposed to enter into his views. To serve them effectually, however, it was necessary that he should be at liberty; negotiations for the purpose were commenced, and Chunda Sahib obtained his freedom.

A.D. 1748. He left Sattara early in 1748, and for some time his fortune was chequered by an alternation of happy and adverse events.* But these were of little importance compared with others which followed, and which not only affected the interests of Chunda Sahib, but convulsed the whole of that large portion of India denominated the Carnatic. These events were the death of Nizam-ool-Moolk, and the contest which ensued for the possession of his power and territories. The deceased Nizam left several sons,† and in addition to their claims, whatever they might be, those of his grandson by a favourite daughter were asserted on the ground of an alleged testamentary disposition. It would be idle to discuss the pretensions of the rivals upon any principles based upon considerations of right. The power of the Nizam had been gained by usurpation, and it were vain and ridiculous to expect that the transfer of such a power should be governed by regard to any law but that by which it was acquired.

* Little interest would probably be taken in a detail of these events, and they are moreover involved in considerable uncertainty, the account of Mr. Orme and that of Colonel Wilks, the two best authorities, being marked by great variations.

† Five, according to Orme. Colonel Wilks enumerates six.

Chunda Sahib determined to make common cause with Mozuffar Jung, the grandson of the deceased Nizam, this determination being taken with a due regard to his own interests. His price was paid in his appointment to the rank of Nabob of Arcot, and the conquest of the Carnatic was to be forthwith undertaken. Dupleix was perfectly ready to assist the confederates, and a force of four hundred Europeans and two thousand sepoys, under the command of M. d'Auteuil, was despatched to their aid from Pondicherry. They joined without difficulty the army with which they were to co-operate, now amounting to forty thousand men. A victory gained principally by means of the European troops, the death of the reigning Nabob of Arcot, the capture of his eldest son, and the flight of the younger to Trichinopoly, left the conquerors at liberty to march to the capital, of which they immediately proceeded to take possession. The news of these events reached Tanjore while the English were in that country, and tended materially to assist them in making favourable terms with the reigning prince. Between that prince and Chunda Sahib there were many grounds of enmity, and the success of the latter was the source of great alarm at Tanjore. The feeling was not ill-founded, for Chunda Sahib, after wasting some time in ostentatious pageantry at Arcot and Pondicherry, proceeded to Tanjore, demanding a large sum for arrears of tribute alleged to be due from the sovereign of that country, and another sum of great amount to repay

CHAP. II. the expenses of the expedition. After a long season of negotiation, and some demonstration of hostility, the Tanjore government agreed to pay a heavy ransom; but before the first payment was completed, Chunda Sahib received intelligence of the advance of Nazir Jung, the second son of Nizam-ool-Moolk, who, being on the spot when his father died, had seized his treasure, and was recognized by the army as his successor; and who, to give to his assumption of the sovereignty a colour of right, pretended that his elder brother had renounced his claim. The news of his approach relieved Tanjore from the unwelcome presence of its invaders, for although but a small part of the stipulated ransom had been received, they broke up their camp with precipitation and retired towards Pondicherry. Nazir Jung was at the head of an army estimated at three hundred thousand men, but the actual strength of which fell far short of that number. On entering the Carnatic he sought the assistance of the English, who, it is said, were convinced by the vastness and splendour of his retinue, that he was the lawful ruler of the southern provinces. It is probable, however, that in complying with his request for military aid, the English were more influenced by the fact that the power and influence of the French were exerted in favour of the rival of Nazir Jung than by any regard to the legitimacy of his title; but, whatever were their motives, they despatched to his camp, which was now in sight of that of Mozuffar Jung, a body of six hundred

Europeans, commanded by Major Lawrence. It is a remarkable fact, that while the English and French were thus preparing for hostile action in Asia, the two nations in Europe were at peace. With reference to this anomalous state of things, Monsieur d'Auteuil sent a message to Major Lawrence, intimating that although the two nations took opposite sides, it was not the intention of the French commander to shed any European blood; but as he did not know in what part of Nazir Jung's army the English took post, he could not be blamed if any shot came that way. Major Lawrence answered that the English colours were carried on the flag-gun of their artillery, and that if M. d'Auteuil would look out he might thence ascertain where the English were posted; that he was as unwilling as the French commander to spill European blood, but that if any shot came his way it would certainly be returned. Subsequently a shot from the French entrenchment did fly over the English battalion, and Major Lawrence, conceiving that it was fired by M. d'Auteuil with the design of trying the disposition of the English, ordered it to be answered from three guns.

At the time when the French commander made the communication which has been related, he was in a state of great difficulty and perplexity. Several officers who had obtained a liberal share of the partial payment made by the King of Tanjore to the invaders of his dominions, had found that their newly acquired wealth required leisure to enjoy it, and

CHAP. II. they had, consequently, solicited and obtained permission to quit the camp for a short time and to seek repose in the city. This created discontent among those called upon to supply their places. They complained loudly of being exposed to danger without hope of advantage, while the men who, without fighting, had acquired wealth at Tanjore were permitted to retire from the field; and they demanded such an amount of money as would place them on an equality with those whom they succeeded. To restore military subordination, one of the malcontents was arrested, but the measure was met by a demand from all the rest to be placed in the same situation with their companion. This requisition would probably have been complied with, had not necessity forbidden it. So many officers could not be spared, and for the time they escaped punishment. The natural consequences of this impunity were manifested in the conduct of the private soldiers, who, imitating the example of their officers, became insubordinate, insolent, and regardless of their duty. The disorder was consummated by thirteen of the discontented officers throwing up their commissions and quitting the camp, when M. d'Auteuil, fearful of risking a battle under such circumstances, determined on withdrawing from the field and marching back to Pondicherry. This determination was a severe blow to the hopes of the party in whose cause they had taken the field; and it was the more fearful because there was little reason to doubt that the retreat of the French would

be followed by the defection of the whole army. Before this should take place, it behoved the confederated leaders to choose the course which appeared most likely to ensure their safety. Chunda Sahib resolved to accompany the French to Pondicherry. Mozuffar Jung, who had been for some time in negotiation with Nazir Jung, resolved to surrender himself to that prince. Promises of liberal treatment were held out to him, confirmed, it is stated, by the sanction of an oath. They were fulfilled in the mode usual in the East. When the person of the defeated prince was secured, he was subjected to all the rigours of captivity. CHAP. II.

Among the immediate consequences of these events were the retaking of Arcot, and the transfer of the government to Mahomet Ali Khan, son of Anaverdy Ali Khan, the former nabob, who had fallen in the battle which gave possession of Arcot to Chunda Sahib. A.D. 1750.

But Nazir Jung was not of a disposition to pursue his good fortune. Differences arose between the English commander and the prince, in consequence of the constant evasion of a request of the former for the confirmation of a grant of a territory near Madras, made by Mahomet Ali in return for the assistance rendered him. Another cause of difference was the refusal of the English to march with Nazir Jung to Arcot, a step which it was unadvisable for them to take, as it would have exposed their settlements to the attacks of the French. The result was that Major Lawrence, the commander of

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the English troops, returned to Fort St. David, and Nazir Jung proceeded to Arcot. There, regardless of the perils by which he was surrounded, he surrendered himself entirely to pleasure.

The French commander, in the mean time, was not idle. He captured a fortified pagoda about fifteen miles west of Fort St. David, and the restored Nabob of Arcot becoming alarmed at his progress, claimed the assistance of the English, promising to pay all the expenses of the troops that should be afforded him. A force consisting of four hundred Europeans and fifteen hundred sepoys, commanded by Captain Cope, was despatched in answer to the request of the nabob; but differences not less irreconcilable than those which had separated the English and Nazir Jung, and not very dissimilar in their nature, brought the plan of co-operation to a speedy close; an event accelerated by the inability or unwillingness of the nabob to discharge his engagement to defray the expenses of the British force. Immediately on the departure of that force, the French attacked the camp of Mahomet Ali. It would be ridiculous to call that which ensued a battle, for the French had only to march up to the entrenchments which were abandoned by those within them. Horse and foot fled with the greatest precipitation and in the utmost confusion. The French did not lose a single man, while the nabob lost nearly a thousand, and with difficulty made his own escape to the camp of Nazir Jung. The French advanced to Gingee, a fortress of some strength,

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which was magnified extravagantly in the estimation of native opinion. Of this place they gained possession with a rapidity calculated to astonish even themselves, and which had the effect of awakening Nazir Jung from the torpor in which he had so long slumbered. He took the field, but with a diminished army, and under other discouraging circumstances. Supplies were procured with difficulty, and from this cause, combined with the inclemency of the weather, sickness began to appear in his camp. Within that camp, however, he had worse enemies than even famine and disease. Dupleix had been for several months carrying on an intrigue upon a large scale, and at length the disaffected officers of Nazir Jung commanded one-half of his army. This attack upon the fidelity of his enemy's officers had not prevented Dupleix from carrying on simultaneously a negotiation with their master, who, wearied with the difficulties with which he had to contend, difficulties greatly aggravated by his own weak and unwarlike character, had resolved to end them by conceding to the French nearly all they asked. At the very time, however, when the concession was resolved on, the plot, of which Nazir Jung was to be the victim, was ripened. Its maturity was announced to Dupleix, and he promised to take measures for securing the success which so much time had been spent in preparing. In December a force of about eight hundred Europeans, and about three thousand sepoys, under the command of M. de la Touche, advanced from Gingee upon the camp of Nazir Jung. After

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CHAP. II. defeating the advanced posts, they attacked the main body of the army with success. Some anxiety was excited by the appearance of a vast body of horse and foot at some distance, drawn up in order, and extending as far as the eye could reach; but it was set at rest by discerning in the centre an elephant bearing a white flag, which was the signal of the confederates of the French, and a halt was made until some further demonstration of their intentions should be made. The issue was not long doubtful; Nazir Jung fell by the hands of one of his treacherous * dependents, and Mozuffar Jung was saluted Viceroy of the Deccan. The fall of the chief is in Oriental armies almost invariably followed by flight, and this instance afforded no exception to the rule. Victory rested with the French, and they forthwith applied themselves to reap its fruits. In this labour, however, they met powerful competitors in the Patan chiefs whose perfidy had led to their triumph. These worthy persons proceeded to Pondicherry for the purpose of enforcing their demands, extending to the remission of all arrears of tribute, which they had not paid for three years, the grant of certain additions of territory, the exemption of those additions, as well as of the countries which they previously possessed, from the payment of tribute to the Mogul empire, and, what more nearly concerned the French, the delivery of one-half of

* Of the circumstances attending the death of Nazir Jung, different accounts are given by Orme, Col. Wilks, and Col. Lawrence, but all agree as to the facts stated in the text.

the value found in Nazir Jung's treasury. After much discussion, in the course of which Dupleix paraded his own moderation as an example for those with whom he was negotiating, some abatement was effected in their claims, and the nabobs swore on the Koran allegiance to the new viceroy.

Pleasure and magnificent display now occupied the entire attention of the French and their ally. The new prince was enthroned with the greatest pomp, and in the splendid pageant Dupleix was the principal actor. Attired as a dignified Mahometan in a dress presented to him by the new sovereign, the vain but wily European bent before the prince in acknowledgment of being appointed governor of all the provinces south of the Kistna. This was not the only favour bestowed on the French and their representative. Dupleix was elevated to the rank of a Heft Huzaree, or commander of seven thousand horse, and permitted to bear an ensign, assigned to persons of the highest note in the empire. No money was to be current in the Carnatic but such as was coined at Pondicherry; the Mogul's revenues in all the countries under Dupleix's government were to be remitted to him, and he was to account for them to the viceroy; the authority of Chunda Sahib, as Nabob of Arcot and its dependencies, was to be subordinate to that of Dupleix, and in the distribution of rewards and honours to those who had assisted Mozuffar Jung in obtaining the throne, the will of Dupleix was that of the sovereign.* Accord-

* Orme's History, vol. i. page 161.

CHAP. II. ing to the constitution of the Mogul empire, many of these grants could have no validity till confirmed by the emperor, but Dupleix did not, on this account, postpone the assumption of the powers conveyed. He held his durbar or court in his palace at Pondicherry surrounded by all the state which became an Eastern potentate. One Oriental custom was alike agreeable to his vanity and his cupidity, and it was rigidly enforced. Neither native nor European was suffered to approach his august presence without a propitiatory gift. The same spirit was carried into the settlement of his claims upon the gratitude of Mozuffar Jung. It is true that to the Patan chiefs he had vaunted of his moderation, but his self-denial was not so rigorous as to restrain him from receiving for his private benefit a sum of money, which, it is believed, did not fall short of three hundred thousand pounds sterling, besides other marks of the kind feelings of Mozuffar Jung in the form of valuable jewels. Thus provident for himself, decency required that he should show some regard for the interests of those whom he commanded and those whom he served. Accordingly a sum of about fifty thousand pounds was obtained from the prince for distribution among the officers and troops who fought at Gingee, and another sum of like amount was paid into the treasury of the French government for the expenses of the war.

These affairs being adjusted, Mozuffar Jung set out for Golconda, escorted by a detachment of French troops, European and sepoy, commanded by

M. Bussy. In passing through the territory of one of the Patan nabobs, who, having placed Mozuffar Jung on the throne, had failed of obtaining the full reward to which, in their own estimation, they were entitled, an affray took place between some horsemen of the prince's train and some villagers. This gave a pretext for the nabob of the district to attack the army of his acknowledged lord; and though the fidelity of himself and his brethren had been vouched by an oath on the Koran, it appeared that none of them felt any hesitation in turning their arms against one to whom they had so lately bound themselves by the most solemn sanction in relations of subordination and allegiance. Having betrayed the predecessor of Mozuffar Jung, they now arrayed their troops against the sovereign of their own choice and creation. A conflict ensued, in which, by the aid of the French troops, the twice perfidious nabobs were worsted. One of them was slain, and another left the field desperately wounded. The imprudent ardour of Mozuffar Jung in pursuing them led to his own destruction. The flying chief turned on his pursuer, and in a personal contest Mozuffar Jung received in the brain the javelin of his adversary, who the next instant fell mortally wounded by the followers of the prince.

In this emergency it became necessary to the interests of the French to find a successor to the viceroyalty of the Deccan, whose inclinations might be as favourable to them as were those of their fallen patron. Mozuffar Jung had left a son, but he was

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an infant, and the favours received from his father were not sufficient, in the judgment of the French commander, to counterbalance his own want of power to add to them. The support of the French was therefore unceremoniously transferred to another branch of the vice-regal house, and Salabat Jung, a younger brother of Nazir Jung, whose cause the English had embraced, was chosen by the French as the new ruler of the Deccan. This arrangement had been made by M. Bussy under circumstances which rendered it expedient that some determination should be speedily taken; and, on communicating it to his principal, Dupleix, he had the satisfaction to find that it was entirely approved. The new Subahdar being ready to confirm all the cessions and privileges which his nephew had conceded to the French, and even to go beyond him in this respect, it is obvious that he possessed the only qualification which, in the eyes of Dupleix, would give to one candidate for the throne a preference over another.

While the French were thus carefully and energetically advancing their interests, the English were doing little for the protection of theirs, and Mahomet Ali seeing slight prospect of successfully maintaining himself as Nabob of Arcot by the aid of his English allies, was endeavouring to make terms with their enemies. To avert this result, and in compliance with his pressing solicitations, small bodies of troops were sent by the British to his assistance, but little success attended their operations, and the

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dominions claimed by Mahomet Ali were gradually passing into the hands of his competitor. The British troops finally took refuge under the walls of Trichinopoly, followed by Chunda Sahib and the French. The conflict of interests between the English and the French seemed indeed about to find a termination in the complete and unchecked ascendancy of the latter power. The trade of the English Company would have been lost with their political influence, for if Dupleix had failed entirely to drive them from the coast, he would have thrown in their way impediments which would have rendered their commerce unprofitable. Such appeared to be the probable tendency of events at the moment when the foundations of the magnificent empire of British India were about to be laid.

Among the commercial servants of the English East India Company was a young man named Robert Clive. The son of an obscure country gentleman, of good lineage but small fortune, he had been sent to India in the capacity of a writer, partly because the appointment afforded a provision for one member of a very large family, and partly because the wayward character of the youth seemed to offer but slender hope of his succeeding in any pursuit that might be open to him at home. The duties and occupations of writers at that period were far different from what they are now. They were not employed in preparing themselves, by study and by practice in subordinate offices, for controlling at a future period the revenues of vast and populous

CHAP. II. districts, or exercising the highest and most important judicial functions. They were literally commercial clerks; and though there was then, as now, a gradation of rank through which they ascended, that gradation had reference solely to commerce, as the names by which the superior classes were distinguished, factor, and junior and senior merchant, sufficiently indicate. From the peculiar situation of foreign traders in such a country as India, a few of the highest class of servants were occasionally called upon to discharge political and diplomatic duties, and from the same cause a few troops were entertained for the defence of the Company's factories. But the employment of the Company's civil servants in duties unconnected with trade was an accidental and extraordinary departure from the general course of things, and their military establishment was maintained solely for the protection of their commerce.

The counting-house and the warehouse were scenes little adapted to the vivacious temperament of Clive, and his career at Madras, where he arrived
A.D. 1744. in 1744, was not quite unmarked by that erratic conduct which had distinguished him at home. Instances are on record, and might readily be quoted, but as they form part of the personal, not the political history of Clive, it is more important to advert to such incidents as are connected with public events, and have the further advantage of giving indications of those qualities which were more fully developed at a future period. When Madras was taken by La

Bourdonnais, Clive was among the English residents who became prisoners of war, and gave their parole. The subsequent infraction of the terms of the capitulation was regarded, and justly, as relieving them from any obligation which they had incurred under that capitulation, and Clive, disguising himself as a native, succeeded in making his escape to Fort St. David. The circumstances of the times concurring with Clive's inclinations, he, in 1747, obtained an ensign's commission, and was present at the unsuccessful attack on Pondicherry with Admiral Boscawen. Here, on occasion of a want of ammunition for the battery at which he was posted, his impetuosity led him to run himself for a supply, instead of sending for it. This act was misrepresented as arising not from zeal but fear. Clive called upon the party who had thus aspersed his military character for satisfaction, and the point would have been referred to the last appeal sanctioned by the usages of society in such cases, but for the interference of bystanders. A court of inquiry was held on the conduct of the two disputants, and the public submission of his defamer cleared the reputation of Clive,* soon to be more decisively vindicated by his own daring acts. Clive was engaged in the second expedition against Tanjore, and held the commission of lieutenant. He volunteered to lead the attack, and Major Lawrence having had previous opportunities of becoming acquainted with his courage and military talent,

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* Malcolm's Life of Clive, vol. i. page 48.

CHAP. II. yielded to him the post which he sought. The force placed at his disposal consisted of thirty-four Europeans only, but seven hundred sepoys were to act with them. A rivulet was to be crossed, and the Europeans effected the passage with some difficulty, and with the loss of four of their small party. A part of the sepoys then passed, and Clive, with the Europeans, advanced briskly to attack the entrenchment in flank, the sepoys being ordered to close upon the Europeans. Instead of obeying these orders, they waited upon the bank for the passing of more of their number, and the rear of Clive's handful of men was thus left exposed. The consequence was that when just presenting their muskets to fire, a body of Tanjore horse, which had been concealed, rushed out sword in hand, and by a rapid evolution gained the rear of the European party, twenty-six of whom were immediately cut down. The sabre of one of the horsemen was lifted to add Clive to the number, and he only escaped the fate of the greater part of his companions by darting aside while his assailant passed him. At the close of the Tanjore war, Clive returned to the mercantile service, but was appointed commissioner for supplying the troops with provisions, an appointment which associated him, though not as a soldier, with the feeble and unfortunate attempt of the English to aid Mahomet Ali, which ended in their retreat upon Trichinopoly. To that place he subsequently accompanied Mr. Pigot, a member of council at Fort St. David in charge

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of some recruits and stores. Returning with an escort of only twelve sepoys, they were attacked by an hostile party armed with matchlocks, who harassed them for some hours and killed seven of their men. The rest having expended all their ammunition were ordered to disperse, and Pigot and Clive only saved themselves by the fleetness of their horses. Another reinforcement sent shortly afterwards was entrusted to Clive, who then received a captain's commission. It was joined by a detachment from Devi-cottah, under Captain Clark, who took the command of the whole; and, after a skirmish with part of the French force, arrived safe at Trichinopoly. But the timid and petty spirit in which the operations of the English had been conducted was ill-suited to the genius of Clive, and on his return to Fort St. David he made such representations to the governor, Mr. Sanderson, as convinced him that the cause of Mahomet Ali could not be effectually aided, but by adopting a course far more bold and vigorous than had yet been taken.

Clive suggested an attack upon Arcot, and offered himself to lead the expedition. Both his suggestion and his services were accepted, but the force placed under his command was proportioned to the means of the British government, and not to the duty to be performed. It consisted of only three hundred sepoys and two hundred Europeans, and the dispatch of even this insignificant number of men almost denuded Fort St. David and Madras of

CHAP. II. troops. The deficiency of numerical strength was not made up by the skill and experience of the officers who were to act under Clive. These were eight in number; but six of them had never been in action, and four of the six were, like Clive, volunteers from the commercial service. With three A.D. 1751. field-pieces, this small body on the 26th August marched to the attack of Arcot, in which was a governor and eleven hundred men. On the 30th they halted within ten miles of the city, and the news of their approach having preceded them, panic prepared the way for an easy conquest. The spies of the enemy reported that they had seen the English marching with unconcern through a violent storm of thunder and rain, and this report gave such an impression of the resistlessness of the approaching foe, that the garrison abandoned the fort, and the English a few hours afterwards marched through a hundred thousand spectators to take possession of it. The greatest order was preserved, and a favourable impression was made on the inhabitants by the restoration to its owners of property to a large amount, which had been deposited in the fort for the sake of security. The first care of Clive was to improve his good fortune by making provision for a siege; but it little suited his impetuosity to wait the chance of attack, and accordingly he made various sorties in quest of the enemy, who usually fled on his approach. On the 14th September he attacked their camp by night, and dispersed its occupants in every direction, without the loss of a

man from his own force. Two eighteen-pounders and some stores were expected from Madras. An attempt made by the enemy to intercept them was defeated; but the convoy sent out for their protection having greatly weakened the garrison of the fort, the enemy was emboldened to make an attack upon it with his entire strength, horse and foot. This attempt too failed, and on the arrival in the town of the detachment in charge of the expected field-pieces and stores, it was abandoned. CHAP. II.

Thus far Clive's success may be regarded more as the result of good fortune than of military skill. He had now to shew that he was not a mere child of fortune, and that the confidence reposed in him was not misplaced. It had been foreseen that the acquisition of Arcot would be followed by the withdrawal of part of the force of Chunda Sahib from Trichinopoly, and this was one object of the attempt. Accordingly the success of Clive was no sooner known, than Chunda Sahib detached four thousand sepoys to act against him. These being joined on their route by Rajah Sahib (son of Chunda Sahib) with one hundred and fifty French from Pondicherry, entered the town on the 23rd of September. On the 24th, Clive made a sally, driving the French from their guns, four field-pieces, but was unable to execute a design which he had formed of carrying them off. On this day he had a narrow escape from death. A sepoy, who was taking aim at him from a window, was disappointed of success through Clive being dragged aside by A.D. 1751.

CHAP. II. an officer named Tremwith, who was immediately shot through the body by the man whose aim he had defeated. On the following day the enemy received a reinforcement of two thousand men from Vellore, and possession was taken of all the avenues leading to the fort. Thus invested by a large force, the fort of Arcot seemed little likely to sustain a protracted siege. The stock of provisions was not more than sufficient to supply the garrison for sixty days, and it became necessary to send all the inhabitants, except a few artificers, away from the fort. Of the eight officers who had accompanied the expedition, one had been killed and two wounded; another had returned to Madras. The troops fit for duty were reduced to one hundred and fifty Europeans and two thousand sepoys. Even this small force was daily diminishing, for although none of the garrison were allowed to appear on the ramparts, except the few necessary to avoid a surprise, several were killed and wounded by the musketry of the enemy, who, sheltered by the surrounding houses, and firing from resting-places, were enabled to select their objects with deadly certainty. The besieging force consisted of one hundred and fifty Europeans, and about ten thousand native troops of various descriptions.

The enemy being ill-provided with artillery, had for some days produced little effect by their attempt at bombarding the fort. The arrival of two eighteen-pounders and several pieces of smaller calibre from Pondicherry, enabled them to erect a battery,

which, almost as soon as brought into play, disabled one of Clive's eighteen-pounders and dismantled the other. The battery continued firing for six days, and a practicable breach was made to the extent of fifty feet. But Clive and his men had been no less active in constructing works for defence, and the enemy appeared afraid of attempting to improve their opportunity of attack.

The critical situation of Clive did not prevent him from indulging in acts requiring labour which could not very well be spared, and whose chief result was a gratification of that love of mischief by which his boyhood had been remarkably distinguished. The fort contained an unwieldy piece of ordnance, which, according to the current tradition, had been brought from Delhi by Aurungzebe, drawn, as it was said, by a thousand yoke of oxen. Clive caused a mound of earth to be raised on the top of the highest tower of the rampart, so as to command the palace across the intervening houses. On this the gigantic engine of destruction was elevated, and being loaded with thirty pounds of powder and a ball proportioned to its dimensions, it was discharged by means of a train carried to a considerable distance on the ground. The ball went through the palace, to the great terror of Rajah Sahib and his principal officers collected there. No other result appears to have been contemplated; but this was deemed sufficient to justify a repetition of the salute on two succeeding days, at the precise time when the rajah's officers assembled at head-quarters. On the fourth

CHAP. II. day the amusement derived from this exercise was terminated by the bursting of the monster-gun which had afforded the means of its enjoyment. It seems, however, to have imparted to the enemy a desire to retaliate. They, in return, raised a vast mound of earth, which commanded not only the gate, but the whole interior of the fort. Clive suffered them to complete the work, and to mount on it two pieces of cannon. He then began to fire on it with his remaining eighteen-pounder: in less than an hour the mound fell with fifty men stationed on it, some of whom were killed and others disabled.

The battery first erected by the enemy was to the north-west of the fort. Subsequently another was erected to the south-west.* The wall in this direction was in a very ruinous condition, and a breach was soon made. The garrison kept up a vigorous fire of musketry against the battery, and several times drove the enemy out of it, but the breach notwithstanding was daily enlarged.

With the prospect of an immediate attack from a force overwhelming, when compared with the means of resistance, Clive's confidence never appears to have deserted him. The Company's agents at Madras and Fort St. David were anxious to relieve him, but a small detachment dispatched for the purpose were unable to effect their object, and after a

* There is some confusion in Orme's account of these transactions. It is quite clear that one battery was erected some time before the other, but Orme gives the 24th of October as the date of both.

sharp conflict with a considerable number of Rajah Sahib's troops, were compelled to retreat. A body of six thousand Mahrattas, who had been hired to assist the cause of Mahomet Ali, lay about thirty miles from Arcot in a state of most suspicious inactivity. The nabob's affairs being thought desperate, his mercenary allies were not disposed to waste their strength in his defence. In the hope of stimulating them to action, Clive found means of communicating with them. Their commander, in reply, expressed his admiration of the gallant conduct of the defence of Arcot, by which, he said, he was then first convinced that the English could fight, and promised to send a detachment to their aid. Intelligence of these communications having reached Rajah Sahib, who commanded the besieging army, he became apprehensive of the probable result, and sent a flag of truce with proposals for the surrender of the fort. Honourable terms for the garrison were offered, and a large sum of money for Clive; while, that no motives for compliance might be wanting, the consequences of refusal were declared to be the storming of the fort and the immolation of every man in it. Clive's answer was strikingly characteristic of the man. He not only refused to surrender the fort, but conveyed his refusal in terms of haughty defiance. The merits of Chunda Sahib's claims were somewhat unceremoniously noticed for the purpose of reproach; the offer of personal advantage to Clive was treated, as it deserved, with contempt; and the threat of storm and slaughter was met by

CHAP. II. the taunting remark, that the English commander had too high an opinion of the prudence of Rajah Sahib, to believe that he would attempt to storm until he was provided with better soldiers than the rabble of which his army was then composed. Notwithstanding this answer, some of the enemy hovered round the ditch, conversing with the sepoys in the British service, and recommending them to desert. They were warned to retire, but the admonition being disregarded, it became necessary to render it more impressive by the adjunct of a volley of small arms, which killed some of the intruders and dispersed the rest.

Before any steps were taken by the enemy in consequence of Clive's refusal of the proffered terms, the promised detachment of the Mahrattas arrived in the neighbourhood and attempted to enter the town, but found every street and avenue barricaded. Thus impeded, they had recourse to their usual and most approved occupation of plundering, relieved by setting fire to some houses in the outskirts of the town, after which they retreated.

Clive was accurately informed of all the proceedings of the enemy, and as the day of attack approached he succeeded in becoming possessed not only of their general design, but of the precise disposition proposed to be made of their force. The

A.D. 1751. dawn of day on the 14th November was to decide the success of the meditated attempt, and the signal for its commencement was to be the discharge of three bombs. The knowledge of its approach did

not diminish the confidence of Clive, nor disturb his equanimity. He made the arrangements which appeared to him necessary for meeting the approaching conflict, and then, to remove the effects of the excessive fatigue which he had undergone, and to gather renewed strength for the struggle, he resigned himself to sleep, with as much calmness as though all danger was at an end, giving orders that he should be awakened on the first alarm.

The day of attack was one among the most distinguished in the Mahometan calendar. Happy was the Mussulman to whom it brought death from the sword of the unbeliever, for his fall was regarded as but a sudden introduction to the highest paradise. By this belief the enthusiasm of the enemy's troops was wrought up almost to madness, and it was further increased by the free use of an intoxicating substance called bang. The morning came, and with it the expected movement. Clive was awakened, and found his garrison at their posts according to the disposition which he had previously made. On the enemy's side a vast multitude were in motion, bringing ladders to every part of the wall that was accessible. Besides these desultory operations there were others in progress, all directed to the same end. Four principal divisions of the enemy's troops marched upon the four points where an entrance to the fort seemed the more likely to be effected—the two gates and the two breaches which had been made in the wall. The parties who attacked the gates drove before them several elephants, armed

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with plates of iron on their foreheads, with which it was expected they would beat down the obstacles which stopped the course of the assailants: but the device was more disastrous to those who employed it than to those against whom it was directed. The elephants, wounded by the musketry of the British force, turned and trampled upon those who were urging them forward. At the north-west breach, as many as it was capable of admitting rushed wildly in, and passed the first trench before their opponents gave fire. When given, it was with terrible effect. A number of muskets were loaded in readiness, which those behind delivered to the first rank as fast as they could discharge them. Every shot did execution, while three field-pieces contributed effectually to thin the number of the assailants. In a few minutes they fell back: but the attempt was only suspended, not abandoned. Another and another party followed, and were driven off as had been those who preceded them.

To approach the south-west breach, the enemy embarked seventy men on a raft, who thus attempted to cross a ditch, and had almost gained their object, when Clive, observing that his gunners fired with bad aim, took the management of one of the field-pieces himself. This he worked with such precision and effect that a few discharges threw the advancing party into confusion. The raft was overset, and those on board thrown into the water, where some were drowned. The remainder saved themselves by swimming back, abandoning the unfor-

tunate raft which was to have borne them to the breach. CHAP. II.

These various attacks occupied about an hour, and cost the enemy in killed and wounded about four hundred men. After an interval employed by the assailants in endeavouring, under much annoyance, to carry off their dead, the firing upon the fort was renewed, both with cannon and musketry. This was again discontinued. A formal demand of leave to bury the dead was complied with, and a truce of two hours agreed upon. At the expiration of the prescribed time the firing once more recommenced, and lasted until two o'clock on the following morning, when it ceased, never to be renewed. At daybreak, the gallant defenders of the fort learned that their besiegers had precipitately abandoned the town. The garrison immediately marched into the enemy's quarters, where they found several pieces of artillery and a large quantity of ammunition. These spoils were forthwith transferred to the fort, and thus ended a siege of fifty days.

Military history records few events more remarkable than this memorable siege. Its conduct at once placed Clive in the foremost rank of distinguished commanders. Justly has it been said that he was "born a soldier."* At the time when, with a handful of men, most of them unpractised in the operations of war, he defended the fort of Arcot against a force several thousand strong, his military

* Major Lawrence's Narrative of the War on the Coast of Coromandel, page 14.

CHAP. II. experience was small, while of military education he was entirely destitute. His boyhood had passed in idleness, or in the reckless perpetration of mischief, while the few years which he had numbered of manly life had, for the most part, been occupied with the details of trade. Deprived of all the means by which, in ordinary cases, men are gradually prepared for the duties of military service or command, he shewed himself a perfect master of the arts of war. Like all other eminent commanders, he communicated to those under him a spirit of devotedness and self-abandonment, which is among the most graceful, as well as the most valuable, qualities of a soldier. An instance of this occurred among the native troops employed in the defence of Arcot, which is alike honourable to them and to their commander. When provisions became scarce, and there was ground for apprehending that famine would compel a surrender, the sepoys proposed that their diet should be restricted to the thin gruel in which the rice was boiled, and that the whole of the grain should be given to the Europeans, as they required more nourishment.* With such a spirit pervading his little garrison, Clive might well look forward to a successful termination of his brave defence of Arcot; but that spirit his own military virtues had fostered and called forth.

In the evening of the day on which the enemy fled from Arcot, the detachment from Madras, which had been prevented from entering the town, arrived

* Malcolm's Life of Clive, vol. i. page 96.

in it. Clive, leaving a garrison in the fort, took the field on the 19th of November with two hundred Europeans, seven hundred sepoys, and three field-pieces. Having summoned Timany to surrender, which immediately yielded, the British force waited for the promised aid of the Mahrattas, who were to join them with a thousand horse; but these adventurers were for some days too much occupied with the interesting duties of plunder to perform their engagement. Their labours, however, received a check from a sudden attack of the French troops of Rajah Sahib, who surprised their camp, and by relieving them of such articles as could be conveniently carried off, demonstrated to the Mahrattas that they must not hope to enjoy a monopoly of the occupation in which they delighted. Intelligence being received of the approach of an European party from Pondicherry, Clive was anxious to obtain the assistance of the Mahrattas in intercepting them before they could join Rajah Sahib. But the only motive by which they could be affected was wanting —there was no prospect of plunder, and Clive marched without his allies. Rajah Sahib made a forced march to arrive where he was to be joined by the reinforcement from Pondicherry; but the Mahrattas were still immovable, until they learned that the reinforcement expected by the enemy were the bearers of a large sum of money: a discovery which had a remarkable effect in rendering them anxious for a conflict, to which they had previously shewn so much indifference. But not more than six hun-

CHAP. II. dred horse could be collected for the duty, the rest being otherwise engaged. By a forced march of twenty miles Clive and his Mahratta associates came in sight of the enemy's force, and, notwithstanding a great disparity of numbers, defeated them. In the pursuit a considerable booty fell into the hands of the victors, much to the gratification of the Mahrattas, with whom the service in which they were engaged became popular. The fort of Arnie Clive was compelled for want of cannon to pass, the governor refusing to surrender, although he agreed to take an oath of allegiance to Mahomet Ali. The great pagoda of Conjeveram was the next object of attention. Here the French maintained a considerable garrison, which had afforded them opportunity of interrupting the communication between Arcot and Madras. From this place they had surprised a party of disabled men returning from the siege of Arcot, and after murdering five or six as they lay helpless in their litters, relented so far as to spare the lives of two officers named Revell and Glass, whom they made prisoners. On being summoned to surrender, the French commander, on the plea that none of his garrison understood English, required his two prisoners to write to Clive informing him that if the pagoda were attacked they would be exposed on the works. The British officers made the desired communication, but added an expression of their hope that no regard for them would induce Clive to discontinue his operations for the reduction of the place. Clive, however, was compelled to

wait the arrival from Madras of the means of effectually commencing an attack. These being obtained, the walls, after three days' battery, began to give way, and the French commander, apprehensive of the just resentment of the English for his cruelty, abandoned the place in the night. Clive having destroyed the defences of Conjeveram, proceeded to Madras, and thence to Fort St. David, to receive the congratulations which awaited him, and which he had so nobly earned.

While Clive, in Arcot, had thus been pursuing an uninterrupted career of success, Chunda Sahib and his French allies were labouring for the reduction of Trichinopoly. But their works were constructed without skill, and their labour and ammunition expended with little effect. Their views however were aided by the pecuniary distress of Mahomet Ali, whose troops openly threatened to desert a master who was unable to pay them. Among the projects of Mahomet Ali, who seems to have had no definite plan of proceeding, but to have intrigued with all parties, in the hope that chance might work something in his favour, was an application to Mysore for aid. That country had long been governed in the name of sovereigns who possessed no particle of real power. A prince, labouring under the misfortune of having been born deaf and dumb, succeeded to the throne early in the eighteenth century. His imperfect organization placed him at the mercy of others, and the mental feebleness of his successors led to the continuance of the system of royal pupilage. The

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ambassador of Mahomet Ali at first met little encouragement from the lordly servants who then exercised sovereignty in the court of Mysore, but magnificent promises, the extent of which was kept secret from the British authorities, dispelled the coldness with which his mission was first received. The negotiation was brought to a successful conclusion, and its provisions ratified by an oath. The face of Mahomet Ali's affairs now began to brighten. In addition to the army of Mysore, the government of that country took into its pay six thousand Mahrattas, of whom those who have been already noticed in connection with the siege of Arcot, formed part. "In conformity," says the historian of Mysore,* "to the uniform principle of Indian policy, as the affairs of Mahomet Ali appeared to improve, he acquired more friends." The Rajah of Tanjore declared in his favour, and dispatched a considerable body of troops to his assistance. From other quarters the nabob received further aid, and his army, thus reinforced, became numerically superior to that of Chunda Sahib. But the army of the latter was stronger in regular troops, and so little reliance did the officer commanding the British force place on his native allies, that he perseveringly resisted their repeated solicitations to attack the enemy till he was reinforced from Fort St. David.

The enemy, however, emboldened by the retirement of Clive, had again appeared in some force in the province of Arcot, and having burnt several vil-

* Colonel Wilks's Sketches, vol. i. page 279.

lages, and plundered some houses belonging to the English, they returned to Conjeveram, repaired the defences, garrisoned the place with sepoys, and threatened to attack the Company's fort of Poonamalee. This diverted to another quarter the British reinforcements destined for Trichinopoly, it being deemed indispensable to check the ravages of the enemy in Arcot. For this purpose all the force that the British authorities could assemble was required. Including a levy of sepoys, a detachment of Europeans from Bengal, and drafts from the garrisons of Arcot and Madras, it did not, however, amount to seventeen hundred men, of whom less than four hundred were Europeans. The European force of the enemy was about equal to that of the British, but his native troops, horse and foot, amounted to four thousand five hundred. The British had six field-pieces: the enemy a large train of artillery. The talents and previous success of Clive pointed him out as the commander of the expedition in the absence of Major Lawrence, that able and experienced officer who was among the first to discover the genius of Clive, having proceeded to England before that genius was fully developed. In anticipation of an attack from the English, the camp of the enemy had been strongly fortified; but, on the approach of Clive, it was abandoned, and his force concentrated at Conjeveram. Thither Clive proceeded by a forced march, but found the pagoda in charge of a garrison, who surrendered at the first summons. The object of the enemy had been suspected, and it

CHAP. II. now became more apparent. The garrison at the fort of Arcot had been considerably weakened in order to add to the force placed under the command of Clive, and it was anticipated that the enemy designed to take advantage of this circumstance. Clive accordingly advanced towards Arcot, and on the road received intelligence that the enemy had entered the town of Arcot, and skirmished against the fort with muskets for several hours. The attempt was to have been aided by co-operation from within the fort, the enemy having corrupted two native officers in the British service, who, on a given signal, were to have opened the gates for their admission. The intended treachery was discovered in time to defeat it. The enemy finding their signals unanswered retired with precipitation. These facts were communicated to Clive by letter from the commanding officer at Arcot, but he was unable to state what route the disconcerted foe had taken.

Uncertainty on this point did not long prevail. Near the village of Coverpah, the van of the British force was unexpectedly saluted by a discharge of artillery from a thick grove of mangoe trees. Clive immediately made provision for the safety of his baggage, and for the disposal of his troops for action. For a time no very decisive results appeared. Two parties of infantry, French and English, continued for two hours to fire upon each other, and the enemy's cavalry made several unsuccessful attacks on a small force, European and native, which was opposed to them. But the artillery from the

grove did considerable execution, and Clive found that he must either become its master or determine on a retreat. The grove, in which the artillery was placed, was defended in front by a steep bank and ditch, but in the rear it was reported to be open and unguarded. Two hundred Europeans and four hundred sepoys were accordingly dispatched thither, and the anxiety of Clive for their success led him to accompany them through part of the circuit which it was necessary to make. This anxiety had nearly proved fatal to his hopes. The infantry who were left firing on that of the French, dispirited by the absence of Clive, and discouraged by the departure of the detachment sent to attack the enemy's artillery, were giving way, and some were actually in flight. The return of Clive was just in time to avert the consequences of his temporary absence. With his wonted address he rallied the fugitives, though not without some difficulty, and the firing was renewed. The attention of the enemy was thus diverted from the more important operation which was in progress in another part of the field.

The party who had been dispatched to the rear of the grove halted at the distance of three hundred yards from it, and an ensign, named Symmonds, advanced to reconnoitre. He had not proceeded far before he came to a deep trench, in which a large body of the enemy's troops, who were not immediately wanted, were sitting down to avoid the random shots. The approach of Ensign Symmonds being observed, he was challenged, and the party in

CHAP. II. the trench prepared to fire. His acquaintance with the French language saved his life, and probably prevented the failure of the attack, for, being mistaken for a French officer, he was suffered to pass. Proceeding onward to the grove, he perceived that, besides the men stationed at the guns, there were one hundred Europeans to support them, but that they kept no look-out, except towards the field of battle. Having made the observations necessary, he returned, keeping at a distance from the trench where his progress had nearly been intercepted, and rejoined his detachment. Upon his report, they immediately marched towards the point of attack, taking the way by which he had returned. They entered the grove unperceived, and at the distance of thirty yards gave fire. The effect was to paralyze the enemy, who, without returning a shot, abandoned their guns and sought safety in flight. Some took refuge in a choultry,* where they were so much crowded that they were unable to use their arms, and quarter being offered them, it was joyfully accepted.

The sudden silence of the artillery informed the British troops in front of the enemy of the success of the attack on his rear. The arrival of some fugitives from the grove conveyed the same intelligence to their opponents, who immediately followed the example of their companions and fled.

The force of the enemy having been broken in Arcot, Clive and his troops were ordered back to

* A house of accommodation for travellers.

Fort St. David, preparatory to their being dispatched to Trichinopoly. On their march, they passed the spot where Nazir Jung had been murdered. To commemorate the success of the French, Dupleix had planned the erection of a new town, to be called Dupleix-Fateabad. In the centre of this city of victory was to have been placed a column, with inscriptions in various languages, recounting the event which it was designed to keep in memory, and magnifying the valour of the French. "Unluckily," says Major Lawrence, "future ages will not be the wiser for it." Clive destroyed all that existed of the projected town, including the foundation which was to support the commemorative column. Thus the evidences of French glory scarcely endured longer than the success which they were intended to record.

The force destined for Trichinopoly was soon ready for the field, and Major Lawrence arriving from Europe at this time, it was placed under his command. This appointment was not calculated to affect the prosperity of Clive, or to diminish his opportunities of earning honourable distinction. Major Lawrence was well acquainted with his merits, and being totally free from the mean jealousy which sees in a rising junior an enemy, he was alike prompt in acknowledging his military talents and ready to call them into action. The detachment moved, and on the 27th March was within eighteen miles of Trichinopoly. Here, being informed that a strong party was posted to intercept them, A.D. 1752.

CHAP. II. Major Lawrence resolved upon proceeding by another road; but, by a mistake of his guides, was led within reach of the very post which he had desired to avoid, and the troops received the fire of six pieces of artillery. It was returned from four field-pieces, supported by one hundred men under Clive, while the line marched on, and was soon out of the reach of the enemy's guns. They then halted till the party with the field-pieces came up. On the following day a more serious affair took place; but the commander of the native cavalry of the enemy being killed, his men, according to established precedent, took to flight, and the rest of the army soon followed their example. The victory would have been more complete, but for the failure of the native troops to co-operate with the British allies. The Mahrattas remained at a distance, idle, though probably not unconcerned, spectators of the fight. Their passiveness was occasioned by the peculiar situation of their leader, who was engaged in a negotiation with Chunda Sahib, and feeling uncertain what turn affairs might take, was unwilling to commit himself with either party. The rest of the British allies appear to have declined fighting, in deference to the example of the Mahrattas. Happily the day was won without them, and the British detachment advanced undisturbed to Trichinopoly. Here the respective commanders had an opportunity of conferring on a plan of operations, but the Mahometans and Hindoos not being able to agree on a fortunate hour of attack, nothing was determined on. A few days after the arrival of the

English reinforcement, the French adandoned their posts, and retreated to the island of Seringham. This movement being hastily made, and without due preparation, was attended with very considerable loss. The retreating enemy carried off their artillery and part of their baggage, but a large store of provisions was burned.

A bold suggestion of Clive's was now acted upon by the commander of the British expedition. It was to divide the small force under his command, and while one half remained at Trichinopoly, to post the other half between Seringham and Pondicherry, in order to cut off the communication on which the French must now depend for their supplies. Major Lawrence justly considered Clive as the fittest man to undertake the command of the separate body, but a difficulty existed in the fact that all the captains in the battalion were his seniors. It was removed by the native generals, who unanimously declared that they would not make any detachment of the troops for the purpose, if they were to be commanded by any other person than Clive. Every thing being arranged, the favourite captain marched on the 6th of April, with four hundred Europeans and a much larger number of sepoys,* four thousand native horse and eight pieces of artillery. He took post at a fort a few miles from Seringham, and on the high road to Arcot and Pondicherry. A. D. 1752.

Dupleix had become greatly dissatisfied with the

* The number of sepoys is stated by Orme to have been seven hundred; Major Lawrence says twelve hundred.

CHAP. II. prospect of affairs at Trichinopoly, and, in the hope of retrieving them, had sent reinforcements of as large amount as he could raise, under Mons. D'Autueil, who was forthwith authorized to assume the chief command, M. Law, who had for some time held it, having displayed little either of enterprise or talent. Clive, apprized of the approach of this force, marched out to intercept it; and D'Autueil, knowing how much depended on his effecting a junction with the army at Seringham, withdrew to a fort which he had just quitted. Clive not meeting the enemy's reinforcement where he had been led to expect them, considered that the report of their approach was a *ruse* to draw him from his fort, and marched back with all possible speed. This was not the fact; but the French commander at Seringham hearing of Clive's departure, but not of his return, resolved to take advantage of it, by attacking the few troops which had been left in possession of the British post. With this view he dispatched eighty Europeans and seven hundred sepoys, aided by the services of eighty English deserters. With reference to the trifling amount of the entire British force at that time in India, it is truly lamentable to find that so large a number of men could be found willing to betray the interests of the country which had given them birth, and of the sovereign to whom they had sworn allegiance. Through a mistake at one of the outposts, the attempt of the enemy had nearly succeeded. The party being challenged, answered that they were friends, and one of the deserters stepping forward,

stated that they had been dispatched by Major Lawrence to reinforce Captain Clive. This assertion, corroborated by the fact of so many of the party speaking English, satisfied the guard. The strangers were suffered to enter without the pass-word being demanded, and one of the guard was dispatched to conduct them to head-quarters. They marched on without giving any disturbance, or meeting with any, until they arrived at a pagoda, where they were challenged by the sentinels, and simultaneously by others posted at an adjacent choultry, within which Clive was asleep. They answered these challenges, not as before, by an attempt to parley, but by discharging a volley into each place. That directed to the choultry was not far from deciding the question of success, a ball having shattered a box at Clive's feet and killed a servant sleeping close to him. After this discharge the enemy pushed into the pagoda, putting all they met to the sword. Clive, awakened by the noise, and not imagining that the enemy could have advanced into the centre of his camp, supposed the firing to proceed from part of his own sepoys, and that the cause of it was some groundless alarm. In this belief he advanced alone into the midst of the party who were firing, as appeared to him, without purpose, and angrily demanded the cause of their conduct. In the confusion he was at first scarcely observed; but at length one of the enemy's sepoys discovering or suspecting him to be an Englishman, attacked and wounded him. By this time the French were in possession of the pagoda. Clive ordered

CHAP. II. the gate to be stormed, but it would admit only two men abreast, and the English deserters within fought with desperation. The officer who led the attack, and fifteen men engaged in it, were killed, and the attempt was then relinquished until cannon could be obtained. At day-break the French officer, seeing the danger of his situation, endeavoured to escape it by a sally; but being killed with several of his men, the rest retreated into the pagoda. Clive, advancing to the porch to offer them terms, experienced another of those remarkable escapes in which his career so much abounded. Rendered weak by the wounds which he had received, he leant upon the shoulders of two serjeants. Both these men were of lower stature than their commander, who, from this cause as well as from the effect of weakness, stood in a stooping position, his body being thus thrown slightly behind theirs. An Irishman who took the lead among the deserters came forward, and addressing Clive in opprobrious language, declared that he would shoot him. This was not an idle threat, for he instantly levelled his musket in the direction in which Clive was standing and discharged it. The ball passed through the bodies of both the men on whom Clive was leaning, but from his relative position with regard to them, he was untouched. This occurrence is said to have facilitated the surrender of the pagoda, the Frenchmen thinking it necessary to disown the outrage which had been committed, lest it might exclude them from being admitted to quarter. The enemy's sepoys without the pagoda endeavoured

to repass the boundaries of the British camp, and succeeded; but the Mahratta cavalry setting out in pursuit of them, overtook and cut them to pieces. Clemency is not a common weakness in the Mahratta character, and according to the report of those engaged in this exploit, not a single man of seven hundred escaped with his life. "It is certain," adds an historian who had the best means of information,* "that none of them ever appeared to contradict the assertion."†

The tide of success now flowed steadily in favour of the British cause. D'Autueil continued to retire and his force to diminish. Further resistance appearing hopeless, if not impossible, he surrendered with the whole force remaining with him, consisting of only one hundred Europeans (thirty-five of whom were British deserters), four hundred native infantry, and about three hundred and forty cavalry. A considerable quantity of military stores passed into the hands of the conquerors, and a large amount of money was expected, it being known that D'Autueil had with him a considerable sum. This expectation, however, was disappointed, the wary Frenchman having contrived to secrete a great part of it among his personal baggage, which he was permitted to carry

* Orme.

† There are some variations between the accounts of Orme and Col. Lawrence of this attempt of the French to surprise the English, affecting in some instances the events themselves, but more frequently the order in which they occurred. In the text, care has been taken to exclude all details which appear to be contradicted by either writer, or to be inconsistent with either.

CHAP. II. away without examination. A part of the remainder was embezzled by the troops on both sides, so that not more than fifty thousand rupees were regularly taken possession of for the benefit of the captors.

The progressive success of the British arms had materially affected the state of affairs in the island of Seringham. The scarcity of supplies, and the small probability of effectually removing this difficulty, the constant annoyance sustained from the English posts, and the expectation, almost amounting to certainty, that these attacks would become more frequent, as well as more alarming—these causes tended to chill the friendship of the native chiefs who had brought their troops to the service of Chunda Sahib, and gradually to detach them from his interest. The greater part of them demanded their dismissal, a demand which he was in no condition to resist, and the request being granted, many of the dismissed parties passed forthwith without hesitation into the service of the British. The desertions, and the fatal blow inflicted on the French interest by the surrender of D'Auteuil, rendered the prospects of Chunda Sahib gloomy indeed.

He had vainly endeavoured to urge the French commander, Law, to a more enterprising course of action, and the time when such a course could have availed was now passed. The health, too, of the ambitious aspirant to the government of the Carnatic had given way under the pressure of mental anxiety; and without the means of evading the difficulties which surrounded him, or the energy to

attempt to force his way through them to a place of safety, his thoughts were no longer turned upon either of these objects. Only one termination of his wretched fortunes was before him, and the sole question for his determination was, whose captive he should become. By the advice of Law, he was dissuaded from surrendering to the English, and induced to trust his person for a time to native faith. On the motives which prompted the advice, different conjectures have been offered. It has been inferred by one writer that Law acted in the belief (certainly well warranted), that Mahomet Ali would not hesitate to sacrifice his rival to his safety, if the opportunity were offered to him, and that the British commander would not withhold the desired victim from his revenge ;* by another,† the latter part of this solution is rejected as incredible, and Law's conduct is ascribed to the conviction that, by a surrender to the English, the cause of Chunda Sahib, and consequently that of the French, would be more permanently and irretrievably injured, than by captivity under the capricious counsels of any native power with whom the life of the prisoner would be safe. This condition it was not easy to ensure ; but the probable danger to the life of the French ally was not to be put in comparison with the positive disadvantage which would result to the French cause from placing him in the hands of the English. Chunda Sahib, knowing little of the character of his European opponents, might not unna-

* This is Orme's view of the subject. † Col. Wilks.

CHAP. II. turally distrust them. At the same time, it is certain that neither his knowledge of the character of the native powers among whom he had to choose a keeper, nor his own position with relation to several of them, were calculated to afford any encouragement to trust them with the custody of his person. The danger of reposing confidence in some of these powers, and the inability of others to render assistance, are thus described by Orme:—"The nabob, Mahomet Ali, was out of the question; the Mysoreans Chunda Sahib knew would make use of him as a means to oblige the nabob to fulfil the agreements he had made with them, and the Mahrattas would sell him to the higher bidder of the two; the Polygars were not strong enough, nor were their troops situated conveniently to effect his escape." Such were the prospects of Chunda Sahib with reference to several of the native powers. Tanjore remained for consideration, and here the expectation of fidelity in the one party and of safety to the other could be but slender. Chunda Sahib had taken arms against the King of Tanjore, and had led his troops against that monarch's capital. Dissimulation might affect to forget this ground of enmity, while the fortune of Chunda Sahib was prosperous; but it was sure to be remembered, when he was reduced from the condition of a powerful chief with a vast army at his disposal, to that of a man deprived of all means of self-defence and an humble suppliant for his life and liberty. One gleam of hope broke in. The King of Tanjore did not command his

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troops in person, and the general, Monackjee, had been deprived of those military rewards which he thought his due, through the enmity of the prime minister. The general being thus at variance with the minister, and dissatisfied with the sovereign, it was calculated that his resentment against the invader of Tanjore would not be very strong, and on this miserable hope Chunda Sahib ventured to rest. A negotiation was commenced, which was managed by Monackjee with all the success derived from dealing with a man who had no resource but to yield. Its completion was hastened by a representation from Monackjee of the necessity of a speedy conclusion, lest the advance of the English should deprive him of the power of ensuring the safety of Chunda Sahib, a danger of which the negotiators on the other side were fully aware. Still they hesitated; and their anxiety to discover and obtain some better security than a Mahratta promise, led to a private interview between Law and Monackjee, in which a demand was made of hostages for the safety of Chunda Sahib. To this demand it was replied, that if treachery were designed, no hostage would prevent it; that the act of giving any would betray the secret of the negotiation, and that the escape of Chunda Sahib would thereby be rendered impracticable. These arguments were not the only means employed to remove the scruples of the French officer. One pledge of fidelity could be given without difficulty and without danger; and Monackjee did not refrain from tendering the same

CHAP. II. security for the safety of Chunda Sahib, which the latter had afforded for his friendly intentions in introducing his troops into Trichinopoly. He bound himself by the most solemn oath to perform the articles of his engagement, and prayed that his own weapons might be turned to his destruction if he failed. That engagement obliged him to convey the fugitive, under an escort of horse, to a French settlement; and, in addition to the weight of the general's oath, the sincerity of his purpose was confirmed by the testimony of one of his officers, who assured Law that he was appointed to command the escort, and exhibited a palanquin which had been prepared for the journey. Whether or not the oath, with its corroborative testimony, dispelled the doubts which had previously existed, cannot be known, but those by whom they were entertained were not in a condition to insist on any other security, and Chunda Sahib proceeded to the camp of Monackjee. He expected a guard to ensure his safety; and a guard was ready to receive him. But, instead of taking his place in the palanquin which had been made ready for his journey, he was forced into a tent, and there loaded with irons. The news was immediately spread through the camp, and the fate of the prisoner became an object of intense anxiety to all parties. In the morning a conference was held on the subject, when great diversity of opinion prevailed. No one suggested the fulfilment of the engagement by which Chunda Sahib had been entrapped into captivity; but there were many

competitors for the office of keeping him in safe custody, or consigning him to the still safer custody of the grave. The nabob Mahomet Ali, the Tanjore general Monackjee, the commander of the Mysore troops, and the chief of the Mahratta force, all contended for the possession of the person of Chunda Sahib; and Major Lawrence, who was present, seeing no chance of agreement, proposed that he should be given up to the British and confined in one of their settlements. In resisting this proposal, the other claimants were once again unanimous; and the meeting broke up without coming to any decision. Two days afterwards, the cause of dispute was removed. A follower of Monackjee entered the tent, where lay the defeated candidate for the government of the Carnatic, bowed down by sickness, bonds, and mental suffering. He needed not to speak his errand. The prisoner too clearly understood it, yet still clinging to hope, where reasonable hope could not exist, implored that he might be permitted to see Monackjee, on the plea that he had something of importance to communicate. But the business of his ferocious visiter was not negotiation. The captive's request was answered by a thrust which pierced his heart; and the assassin, having thus done his work, cut off his victim's head as evidence of the deed. This was immediately sent to Mahomet Ali, who, after gratifying himself and his court with an inspection of it, directed that it should be publicly exhibited for the pleasure of the multitude.

There is some difficulty in understanding the

CHAP. II. motives of Monackjee in thus putting to death a man, by whose escape he might certainly have obtained considerable advantage. Colonel Wilks justly regards it as incredible, that he should have murdered his prisoner simply for the purpose of preventing disputes among the confederates, and without securing his price. His solution of the matter, founded on native authority, is, that Chunda Sahib was murdered at the instigation of Mahomet Ali; and as Monackjee was not likely to perpetrate the crime merely from motives of courtesy to the nabob, it is to be presumed that its price was either paid or promised.

The conduct of Major Lawrence, with regard to the unhappy prisoner, has been thought equivocal; and the malice of Dupleix founded on it a charge of participating in the guilt of the murder. The charge was too incredible to be believed by any one; yet it is to be lamented that, for his own honour as well as for that of his country, Major Lawrence did not act with greater firmness and decision. But while no one can peruse the history of the conference and its results without entertaining such feeling, it must be recollected that, at this time, the English had not approached that degree of power and importance in India which they have since attained. They were mere auxiliaries in the contest carried on for the government of the Carnatic, and had but recently ventured to take any part in the dangerous field of Indian politics. Major Lawrence, though an excellent officer, possessed little of the daring and in-

dependent genius of Clive, and he might believe that, in claiming for the merchants whom he served the right of arbitrating on the differences of native powers, he should endanger those trading interests which it was his duty to protect. In this view, Major Lawrence may claim an honourable acquittal, though it must be wished that the chief command of the British force had at this time been held by some one, who would have felt justified in adopting a bolder policy at the call of humanity, good faith, and national honour.

The merits or demerits of Chunda Sahib affect not the questions connected with his betrayal and murder; but the examination of the eventful chapter of his life cannot be closed without some reference to them. All testimonies concur in rendering honour to his military talents, and what is more remarkable, they are nearly as unanimous in ascribing to him the qualities of benevolence, humanity, and generosity. It is not easy to discern the operation of any of these virtues in the means by which he made himself master of Trichinopoly. Orme, indeed, after recording that Chunda Sahib was generally acknowledged to have been a brave, benevolent, humane, and generous man, adds the qualifying clause, "as princes go in Hindostan." Mahometan judgment upon his character would seem to be more just, for Colonel Wilks states that his death is hardly ever mentioned by a Mussulman, but as a manifestation of Almighty vengeance. While national calamity may justly be regarded as a visitation for national guilt, the spirit

CHAP. II. of Christianity will render those whom it influences slow in drawing a similar conclusion in the case of individuals. But under whatever impressions the event be considered, no one can fail to be struck by the remarkable fact, that upon the very spot where Chunda Sahib had, by a false oath upon a counterfeit Koran, set at nought the bonds of friendly alliance and good faith—there, after the expiration of sixteen years, ensnared by a similar act of perfidy, did he meet his death by the hand of an assassin. Fiction affords not a more extraordinary illustration of poetical justice than is furnished by the termination of the life of Chunda Sahib.

The fortune of those whom Chunda Sahib had quitted, so unhappily for himself, remains to be noticed. Before his departure, the English force had received a battering train from Devi-cottah, and the French commander had been required to surrender at discretion. Subsequently a more peremptory demand was made, and Law, being at length convinced of that which he was reluctant to believe—that D'Autueil and his force had fallen into the hands of the British, requested a personal conference with Major Lawrence. The result was that, after much altercation, partly grounded on the anomalous position of the English and French, in thus being at war in India while in Europe they were in peace, terms were agreed upon and a capitulation signed. The officers were to depart on parole, the privates to remain prisoners, the
A. D. 1752. deserters to be pardoned. On the 3rd of June, Captain Dalton took possession of Seringham, with the

artillery and military force. The troops immediately in the French service were marched to Fort St. David; those of their allies were suffered quietly to disperse. Thus, without a battle, ended the struggle to secure to Chunda Sahib the government of the Carnatic, on the very day which closed his earthly career. CHAP. II.

CHAPTER III

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A. D. 1752.

THE success which had attended the operations of the force engaged in the cause of Mahomet Ali, it was the desire of Major Lawrence to improve. He accordingly urged upon the nabob the necessity of proceeding to the reduction of those parts of the Carnatic which had not yet been subjected to his authority. The propriety of this advice could not be disputed; but though calculated alike to advance the interests and gratify the vanity of the prince, he manifested a reluctance to act upon it, which, to the British commanders, was unaccountable. The mystery was at length explained. The price at which Mahomet Ali had agreed to purchase the aid of Mysore was, the cession to that power of Trichinopoly and all its dependencies, down to Cape Comorin.* Under this agreement, Nunjeraj, the Mysorean commander, demanded the transfer of the fortress which had just surrendered. Mahomet Ali objected, but Nunjeraj refused to march unless his demand were complied with. Men are seldom at a loss for reasons to justify a course which they are disposed to follow, and on such occasions the ingenuity of Ori-

* Wilks's Historical Sketches, vol. i. page 277.

ental diplomacy is never baffled. Mahomet Ali adduced numerous arguments with the view of convincing Major Lawrence and Nunjeraj that he ought not to surrender Trichinopoly. With the former he found little difficulty, but the Mysorean leader was not so easily satisfied. Some of the reasons of Mahomet Ali were designed to shew that he was not bound to fulfil his engagements at all; others, that the stipulation under which the surrender of Trichinopoly was required ought not to be fulfilled at that particular period. One point urged by the nabob was, that the provisions of the treaty had been extorted from him by extreme distress, and that the Mysorean chieftain could not have expected that they should be observed. Mahomet Ali also claimed the credit of acting from higher motives than a regard to self-interest. He, it was represented, was but a deputy of the Mogul emperor, deriving his authority from that sovereign, and holding it only during his pleasure; to transfer to another any part of the dominions thus committed to his charge would, it was urged, be a breach of duty which could not fail to bring, both upon himself and his allies, the vengeance of the supreme authority of Delhi. The argumentative resources of Mahomet Ali were not yet exhausted. He charged his ally with misinterpreting the terms of their engagement. He maintained, that it never was agreed that the surrender of the fortress of Trichinopoly should be the price of its capture, nor was it reasonable that such a price should be paid; but he professed him-

CHAP. III. self willing to give it up, when, by the aid of Mysore, he should be placed in quiet possession of his other dominions—and this, notwithstanding the expectation of obtaining it was, in his judgment, too extravagant to have been entertained by Nunjeraj—and notwithstanding also the incapacity of Mahomet Ali to alienate, without the permission of the Mogul emperor, any portion of the territories over which he exercised a delegated authority. This postponement of the transfer of Trichinopoly was defended on the ground that, if the government of Mysore were at once put in possession of its reward, it might withhold that future assistance which the nabob required for the conquest of his other dominions: a result certainly not improbable. The consistency of these arguments with each other it is happily not necessary to vindicate. They were adapted for the use of different times, different services, and different persons. Some were for Major Lawrence, others for the Mysoreans. In estimating the motives of Mahomet Ali, they may all be passed by, the fact being simply, that he was resolved not to part with Trichinopoly if it were possible to retain it. The state of affairs caused by the refusal of the nabob to execute an engagement with Mysore, which had been kept secret from the British, was productive of great embarrassment to the last-named power. Major Lawrence applied for instructions from the presidency, and both the contending parties made applications to the same quarter. But the British authorities refused to interfere, and only

recommended to the disputants an amicable adjustment of their differences. CHAP. III.

The office of a mediator, thus declined by the representatives of the East India Company, was readily taken up by the Mahratta chieftain, Morari Row. This person having had the good fortune to secure the confidence of both parties, entered upon his duties in form. A conference was agreed upon, which took place in the nabob's palace, and was graced by his personal presence. The interests of Mysore were under the care of two commissioners specially deputed for the purpose. Captain Dalton, an English officer in command of the garrison, was present as a spectator. The performances of the day commenced by a long speech from the Mahratta, who enlarged upon the circumstances which had led to the connection of Mahomet Ali with Mysore, and on the events which had followed. When his hearers and himself had been sufficiently gratified by the display of his eloquence, Morari Row produced the treaty on which the decision of the question at issue mainly depended, and, with the air of an honest and impartial umpire, called upon Mahomet Ali to fulfil his engagement by the delivery of Trichinopoly.

The nabob performed his part no less admirably. He listened to the harangue of his friend with patience, acknowledged his obligations to Mysore with becoming gratitude, and expressed his resolution to fulfil his engagement in due time. But he claimed indulgence, because, having no considerable fortified town but Trichinopoly, he was for the present un-

CHAP. III. provided with any place to which he could remove his family. When the whole of the province of Arcot should be reduced to obedience, the difficulty would no longer exist; and, to give time for the purpose, he required a respite of two months, at the end of which period Trichinopoly should be given up. This exposition of the intentions of Mahomet Ali was perfectly satisfactory to his friend the Mahratta; the conference terminated, and the Mysorean commissioners withdrew. It was now no longer necessary to preserve the tone which had been previously maintained. The chief actor in the scene which had just closed assumed a new character, in which no eyes but those of the nabob and Captain Dalton were permitted to view him. Casting off the solemn dignity of the umpire, and assuming a deportment at once confidential and courtly, the versatile Mahratta expressed a hope that the nabob attached no importance to what he had said in presence of the Mysorean commissioners; and to shew that his penetration into the views of others was not inferior to his skill in concealing his own, he further intimated his conviction that the nabob had no intention of performing the promise which he had then made. The acute perception of Morari Row, so far from offending the nabob, seemed to win his affection. Charmed not more by the friendly disposition than by the profound sagacity of the Mahratta, Mahomet Ali presented him with a draft for 50,000 rupees, as a retaining fee for his services, with a promise of as much more if he could succeed

in procuring relief from the fulfilment of the treaty. Morari Row readily accepted both the money and the commission, intending at all events to profit from both parties, and, if possible, to overreach both by obtaining Trichinopoly for himself.

This intrigue has been treated at greater length than it would deserve, did it not afford a curious illustration of the state of feeling too common among the native states, and of the difficulties with which European statesmen have to contend in the course of negotiations, where the avowed and the secret objects of the parties engaged are at variance, where promises are given without the slightest intention of redeeming them, where the most elaborate schemes of deception and chicanery are formed and carried into effect, where no credit can be attached to the most solemn professions, and where an intense selfishness, unchecked by any restraints of morality or honour, is the sole principle of action.

The disputes, jealousies, and private designs of the native powers, placed a bar on the prosecution of the object for which they were ostensibly brought together. Under the expectation that affairs would be arranged between the nabob and the Mysoreans, the British troops had marched from Trichinopoly, to aid in establishing the authority of Mahomet Ali in other parts of the dominions which he claimed. The troops of the nabob and his allies were to follow; but neither Mysoreans nor Mahrattas were willing to move. Their inertness, and the information which reached the British commander as to the

CHAP. III. probable result of his advancing, induced him to return two days after he had quitted Trichinopoly. The presence of the British troops brought about the appearance of an accommodation. The nabob made over to the Mysore general the revenues of the island of Seringham, and of some adjacent districts, which the latter was to collect for himself; the promise of surrendering Trichinopoly at the end of two months was repeated, and in the meantime Mahomet Ali agreed to receive into the city seven hundred troops, provided they were not Mahrattas, for by this time the nabob had become suspicious of his favourite advocate and ally. On these conditions, the assistance of Mysore was to be continued. This arrangement answered the purpose of both parties, which was to gain time and opportunity for effecting special objects. Mahomet Ali was not prepared to convert his ally of Mysore into an avowed enemy, because it would interfere with his prospects of obtaining the yet unsubdued districts to which he laid claim; while Nunjeraj was well pleased that the nabob and his English allies should depart for this or any other purpose, as their absence was necessary to enable him to put into practice the design which he had formed of possessing himself of Trichinopoly. His desires and expectations were to a certain extent gratified. The nabob marched to the northward, accompanied by a British force consisting of five hundred Europeans and two thousand five hundred sepoys; leaving only two hundred Europeans and fifteen hundred sepoys in garrison at

Trichinopoly, under the command of Captain Dalton. The Mysoreans and Mahrattas were to follow; but their commanders chose that they should remain where they were. The army of the nabob was further weakened by the secession of Monackjee and his troops, in consequence of the authorities of Tanjore disapproving of the proposal to give up Trichinopoly to the Mysore government. Other chieftains followed the example of Monackjee and departed with their troops, and Mahomet Ali was thus left without any efficient support except that which he received from the British.

Mahomet Ali, and a large part of the British force, had no sooner left Trichinopoly than the designs of Nunjeraj became apparent. His first attempt was directed to corrupt a corps of Mahomet Ali's troops, whom he had the satisfaction of finding not indisposed to his purpose. Large sums of money were expended in bribing these men, and the liberality of Nunjeraj would probably have been rewarded with success, had not its fame reached the ears of Captain Dalton. That officer, previously on his guard, now redoubled his vigilance, causing the artillery on the ramparts to be pointed every evening inwards, towards the quarters of the Mysore troops who had been admitted within the place, and those of the corps upon whose cupidity Nunjeraj had practised. Other precautions followed. At an inspection of the army, the troops who had been tampered with were ordered to deliver up the flints of their guns for the alleged purpose of being replaced

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by better. This proceeding convinced the officers through whom the bribes of Nunjeraj had been conveyed, that the transaction was no longer a secret; and their only course being now to make their peace in the best manner that offered, they voluntarily communicated to the British commander that which he already knew, protested that they had taken Nunjeraj's money from no other motive than the influence of compassion for the distress of their men, who had received scarcely any pay for nine months, and implored forgiveness. To aid their suit, and attest their sincerity, they brought the money which they had received, and which, judging from the share of the principal officers (16,000 rupees), appeared to have been dispensed with no niggard hand. "Captain Dalton," says Orme, "made them few reproaches." Whether his forbearance was occasioned by a belief in the sincerity of their repentance and a conviction of their returning fidelity, or whether it originated in some other motive, the historian does not relate. But it is certain that, notwithstanding the signs of penitence which they had manifested, Captain Dalton did not think their continuance at Trichinopoly desirable. He accordingly dispatched them to join their master, Mahomet Ali.

Neither the discouragement of defeat, nor the unpleasant consciousness of having expended money without return, withheld Nunjeraj from pursuing the object on which he had set his mind; and it now occurred to him that the assassination of Cap-

tain Dalton and of Kheir-o-Deen, the brother-in-law of Mahomet Ali, would be important steps towards its attainment. Among such a population as then inhabited and surrounded Trichinopoly, it was not difficult to find instruments for this or any other base purpose. Several persons were to assist in executing the dark commission, but its fortune was not better than that of the plan by which it had been preceded. Intelligence was obtained of the design, and two of those who were to have carried it into effect were arrested. Nunjeraj was reproached with this atrocious attempt, but, as might have been expected, he denied all knowledge of it. The two men who had been secured were each sentenced to be blown from the mouth of a gun, but the humanity of Nunjeraj, or some other feeling, induced him to interpose for their protection. He did not indeed appear personally as a supplicant for mercy towards those whom he had instigated to crime. His assumption of such an office would have been inexpedient and probably vain; he therefore had recourse to the Mahratta chief, Morari Row, who readily entering into the amiable feelings of his friend, solicited from Captain Dalton the pardon of the guilty men. In consequence of this intercession, the criminals escaped with no severer punishment than the terror of having been bound to the muzzles of two guns, preparatory, as they believed, to their execution. This unexpected exercise of mercy is ascribed by Orme to the reluctance of Kheir-o-Deen to offend the Mahrattas; but it was certainly injudicious, and is

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not unfitly characterized by a later writer* as unaccountable. Its effect was shewn in renewed attempts to corrupt the fidelity of the garrison. An overture was made to a native officer in command of one hundred and eighty sepoys, by two agents of Nunjeraj, whose mission was authenticated by the possession of engagements signed by their master. But these emissaries made an unfortunate choice of a subject for the commencement of their practice. The man whom they addressed, an old and faithful servant of the Company, acknowledged the favour intended him in a manner at once unexpected and undesired. He seized the parties by whom his fidelity had been assailed, and carried them to Captain Dalton. Whether the charity of the Mahratta chief was exhausted, or whether his good offices were on this occasion exerted in vain, does not appear, but the men were executed; and the result of this step was, that Nunjeraj could henceforward find among his own people none bold enough to undertake the work either of corruption or assassination. He was obliged, therefore, to seek elsewhere for emissaries, and after a short interval he imagined that he had found in an European the person of whom he was in search. The individual thus honoured with the notice of the Mysorean leader was a Neapolitan, named Clement Poverio. This man, who had been long resident in India, had the command of a company in the service of Mahomet Ali, and in the exercise of his duty had frequently the

* Col. Wilks.

guard over the French prisoners in the city. In addition to his military occupations, Poverio was engaged in trading pursuits, which led him into the Mysorean camp, and from his knowledge of the native languages he had sometimes acted as an interpreter between Captain Dalton and Nunjeraj. Opportunities, therefore, were not wanting for communication with Poverio, and of one of these Nunjeraj availed himself to seek his assistance in getting possession of the town. To shew the feasibility of the project, Nunjeraj affirmed that, in addition to the Mysorean troops in garrison, he had many friends in the town; and to connect the interest of the stranger with his own, he held out a promise of large reward. Poverio met the overture with the air of a man who is not indisposed to compliance, but who sees difficulties and dangers which require some consideration. He said that he must try the disposition of his officers, and left Nunjeraj under the impression that his object was likely to be attained. On his return to the town, Poverio's first act was to proceed to Captain Dalton, to whom he made a free communication of all that passed with Nunjeraj. He was instructed to return to the camp on the next day, and avow his willingness to undertake the task for which his service had been sought. He did so; and his management of the affair was so dexterous, that he succeeded in entirely securing the confidence of the Mysorean leader. A plan of operations was arranged, and the terms of carrying it into effect fixed. An agreement embodying those

CHAP. III. terms was drawn up, signed by Poverio and Nunjeraj, and solemnly impressed with the great seal of Mysore. By this instrument it was stipulated that Poverio should receive 20,000 rupees for his personal benefit, and 3,000 more to buy fire-arms. With these he was to arm the French prisoners, who were to be set at liberty for the purpose of aiding in the capture of the place. Simultaneously with their release, Poverio was to seize on the gate nearest the place where the Mysoreans were encamped, and to hoist a red flag as a signal for the army to move to take possession of the town. That nothing might be wanting to ensure success, six resolute ruffians were provided, whose especial duty it was to watch for Captain Dalton's appearance after the alarm was given, and to dispatch him. Hitherto all went well for the purpose of the British commander. He had made the necessary preparations for defence without exciting suspicion of his connection with the visits of Poverio to the Mysore camp, or his cognizance of the plan which had been arranged with Nunjeraj. All the cannon that could be brought to bear on the Mysorean camp was prepared to greet the enemy on his approach, and about seven hundred men were concealed near the gateway where admission was expected, ready to receive the intruders in a manner not anticipated. But the attempt never was made, having been frustrated in an extraordinary manner. When all his arrangements were completed, Captain Dalton informed Mahomet Ali's brother-in-law of the design which had been laid to surprise the place,

and of the means which had been provided for its defeat. The representative of the nabob regarded the matter in a very different light from Captain Dalton. He had no disposition to encounter the hazard of an attack, and, in the language of Major Lawrence, consulting nothing but his fears, he sent a message to Nunjeraj, informing him that his plot was discovered and that measures had been taken to prevent its execution. This step he deemed a master-stroke of policy, and communicated the intelligence of it to Captain Dalton with much self-gratulation. Nunjeraj, as might have been expected, abstained from any attempt against the city, and not thinking himself quite safe within the reach of its guns, removed his camp to some distance. His disappointment sought relief in inflicting vengeance on Poverio, for whose person, dead or alive, he offered a large reward. This led to a recommendation from Major Lawrence to retort on the enemy with their own weapons. Captain Dalton continued to hold frequent conferences both with Nunjeraj and Morari Row; and Major Lawrence's advice was, that advantage should be taken of one of these opportunities to seize the two native generals. The authorities of the presidency decided against this suggestion, and it cannot be doubted that they decided rightly. To turn the perfidy of Nunjeraj to its own discomfiture—to make Poverio the instrument of bringing on the head of the man who would have seduced him from his duty the mischief intended for those who had a lawful claim to his fidelity, was a course

CHAP. III. to which the most scrupulous moralist can scarcely object. But to take advantage of an opportunity where confidence was implied and danger could not be expected, to seize the persons of men who, faithless as they were, were still recognized as allies, would have brought irretrievable disgrace upon the British name. With regard to Nunjeraj, at least, it is quite true that his repeated attempts on the life of Captain Dalton divested him of all claim to forbearance, on any grounds of personal consideration. But the character of the British nation required that, even towards a perfidious ally, the usages of civilized men should be observed; and that retribution, if it reached him, should find its way through a channel uncontaminated by dishonour. All Englishmen who respect the good name of their country have reason to rejoice in the decision of the authorities at the presidency on this occasion.

The hollow friendship which subsisted between the respective parties congregated in the neighbourhood of Trichinopoly continued until the expiration of the two months fixed as the date at which the surrender of the town to Nunjeraj was to take place. A formal demand was then made of it; but Mahomet Ali's brother, whose courage always beat high when no immediate danger was to be apprehended, met the call in a spirit of lofty indignation. He reproached the messengers of Nunjeraj with the treachery of their master, the proof of which he exhibited in the agreement with Poverio bearing the signature of Nunjeraj, and distinctly

informed them that the city would not be given up at all. He intimated, however, that the nabob was not forgetful of the expenses incurred by the state of Mysore on his account, and promised that the amount should be repaid; a communication which would have been more satisfactory, if the promise had not been qualified by a postponement of its execution until the Nabob's finances should be in a better condition. To this qualification Nunjeraj did not hesitate to avow his dislike. The claim which he made amounted to 8,500,000 rupees; and as a proof of his moderation and desire for a peaceful settlement of differences, he professed himself willing to abandon his claim to Trichinopoly, if immediate payment of his demand were made—a condition which he knew could not be complied with.

Such was the state of affairs at Trichinopoly. To the northward Mahomet Ali succeeded in obtaining a partial recognition of his authority, but the more powerful chiefs waited the chance of events, and the stronger fortresses were invincible by his arms. In this situation he applied to the British authorities for an additional force to undertake the reduction of Gingee. To this attempt the judgment of Major Lawrence was decidedly opposed, and he proceeded to Madras (to which place the presidency had recently been removed from Fort St. David), for the purpose of dissuading the Company's government from compliance. But his representations were disregarded. Two hundred Europeans, with fifteen hundred sepoys, were placed under the command of Major

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Kinneir, an officer who had recently arrived in India; and this force, with six hundred of the nabob's cavalry, were destined to achieve the object which Mahomet Ali had in view. At first some trifling advantages were gained, but upon the troops arriving within a short distance of Gingee, the wisdom of Major Lawrence's advice became apparent. The force under Major Kinneir was utterly unequal either to attack the fortress or to maintain possession of the passes through the mountains by which Gingee was surrounded. The garrison was summoned to surrender, and with this ineffectual measure ended the demonstration against the place. In the meantime Dupleix had dispatched a considerable body of French troops which had taken a post in the rear of the force employed against Gingee. To meet this new difficulty reinforcements were obtained, and Major Kinneir retired to give the enemy battle. Here misfortune continued to attend this ill-planned and ill-fated expedition. The point of attack selected by Major Kinneir was badly chosen, and by an artifice the English were led away from their field-pieces to a place where they were exposed to those of the enemy. Major Kinneir was severely wounded at a time when part of his troops were giving way. This increased the panic which had already begun, and Europeans and natives alike fled in disorder. Of the entire force, only two ensigns and fourteen British grenadiers stood their ground. These gallantly defended their colours till shame induced a few of the fugitives to return,

when the whole retired in good order. The disgrace brought on the British arms by this affair was worse than the defeat. It was so felt by Major Kinneir, who recovered of the bodily wound which he had received, but shortly afterwards sunk under a disease engendered by a wounded spirit.

The English troops and those of Mahomet Ali retired to a redoubt about three miles from Fort St. David, where they waited for reinforcements from Madras, at which place a body of Swiss had just arrived from Europe in the service of the Company. These it was proposed to dispatch to the aid of the British force in the neighbourhood of Fort St. David, and one company was embarked in small country boats to proceed thither. But the arrangement was defeated by a movement on the part of Dupleix, which the Madras authorities had not anticipated. When the boats arrived in sight of Pondicherry they were seized, the troops taken out, carried into the town, and made prisoners. This proceeding, Dupleix alleged, was quite as justifiable as the capture of his troops at Seringham. Indeed it would demand the exercise of a very skilful casuistry to reconcile any part of the hostile operations carried on between the English and French in India, while the two countries were at peace at home, with the received principles of the law of nations.

On the news of the seizure of the boats and the imprisonment of the troops reaching Madras, it was resolved not to entrust the remainder of the Swiss, consisting of another company, to the same mode of

CHAP. III. conveyance. They were accordingly forwarded in one of the Company's ships, and Major Lawrence embarked with them. The enemy's force which had defeated Major Kinneir had been considerably strengthened, and now amounted to four hundred and fifty Europeans, fifteen hundred sepoys, and five hundred native horse. It was encamped close to the bounds of Fort St. David. The army of which Major Lawrence took the command was superior as to numbers. It consisted of four hundred Europeans, seventeen hundred sepoys in the British service, and about four thousand of the nabob's troops, cavalry and infantry. The enemy seemed impressed with a belief that the allied force was too strong for them, as, on Major Lawrence's arrival, they retired in the night to Bahoor. Being followed, they still continued to retire towards Pondicherry; and their commander, a nephew of Dupleix, named Kerjean, dispatched a letter to Major Lawrence, protesting against a violation of the French territory. The orders of Major Lawrence forbade his entering its limits, and he consequently contented himself with attacking an outpost which lay beyond them. This the enemy abandoned, and the whole army withdrew under the walls of the town.

In this situation they manifested so determined a disposition to remain, that Major Lawrence became weary of waiting for a change. Stratagem at length relieved him from the monotonous duty of watching an enemy whom he was desirous of engaging, but who would not advance, and whom he was

forbidden to follow. The British force made a precipitate movement back to Bahoor, and their apparent want of confidence deceived Dupleix, whose sanguine reliance upon his own good fortune rarely suffered him to doubt when appearances were favourable to his views. Kerjean was not deceived, and on receiving orders from his uncle to follow the English, he remonstrated. He was answered by orders to the same effect as those which had preceded them, and so peremptory in tone as to leave him no choice but to obey. He did obey—advanced in the direction in which Major Lawrence had retired, was attacked by that officer, and summarily defeated. The enemy's line being broken by the English grenadiers, gave way, and panic flight succeeded. The nabob's cavalry were desired to pursue, but they found more agreeable employment in plundering the enemy's camp. Kerjean, with thirteen of his officers and one hundred men, were made prisoners, and the whole of the enemy's stores, artillery, and ammunition was taken.

This success of the British army produced a marked effect upon the state of feeling at Trichinopoly. Dupleix had been intriguing both with the Mysoreans and the Mahrattas, and he had not found it difficult to detach them from a cause towards which neither bore any sincere good-will. Emissaries of these parties had proceeded to Pondicherry, where a treaty had been concluded, Dupleix engaging to put the Mysorean chief in possession of Trichinopoly. The mask of friendship for the nabob and his

CHAP. III. British ally was about to be dropped, and a large body of Mahrattas was actually dispatched to join the French. Their progress was slow, as the plunder of the provinces through which they had to pass required time; and this saved them from a step which, under the circumstances, they would have regarded as false, and might have found inconvenient. The news of the affair at Bahoor gave a new direction to their route. They proceeded to the camp of Mahomet Ali; and their commander, after congratulating the nabob on the happy success of his arms, lamented deeply his own disappointment in having been deprived of the honour of sharing in the glories of the day. What degree of credit Mahomet Ali afforded to these professions is uncertain, but the Mahratta gave one evidence of his friendship which ought to have been conclusive: he took the oath of fidelity to Mahomet Ali.

The British authorities were not in a condition to add greatly to the amount of force employed in aiding the cause of the nabob. Notwithstanding this, an application was made by that prince for the means of reducing two strong places, called Chingleput and Covelong. All that could be furnished was a body of about two hundred Europeans and five hundred sepoys. This force was not only small, but was formed of very unpromising materials. The European portion of it consisted of recruits just arrived at Madras, whose character seems to have been such as left England little reason to regret their departure. Indeed such, according to Orme, was then gene-

rally the case with regard to military adventurers in the East; for, speaking of this body of recruits, he observes, that they were, "as usual, the refuse of the vilest employments in London." The sepoys might have some advantage over their European coadjutors in point of character, but they had none in respect of experience, being newly raised and unaccustomed to a military life. With such troops, however, it was resolved to reduce forts of considerable strength—a task which might justly have been regarded as hopeless, but for the union of talents, intrepidity, and perseverance, which had already enabled their destined commander to triumph where circumstances seemed to warrant no feeling but despair.

Clive, though in a miserable state of health, the consequence of the climate and of his previous fatigues, volunteered his services to command the expedition, and the offer was too welcome to fail of acceptance.

Covelong is situated about twenty miles from Madras. It had no ditch, but a strong wall flanked by round towers, on which were mounted thirty pieces of cannon. The French had obtained possession of it by stratagem* in 1750. It was now

* The stratagem was of a most discreditable kind. The fortress being within musket-shot of the sea, a French ship anchored in the roads and made signals of distress. Several natives thereupon went on board, where they were told that most of the crew had died of scurvy, and that the rest must perish in like manner if they were not permitted to come on shore immediately, as they were unable to navigate the ship. The nabob's officer in

CHAP. III. garrisoned by fifty Europeans and three hundred native troops.

The British detachment, accompanied by four 24-pounders, marched on the 10th of September. A. D. 1752. On arriving near their destination, half the party were dispatched under the cover of night to take possession of a garden lying about six hundred yards south of the fort, which they effected. At break of day a detachment from the garrison approached unobserved, and their fire having killed the officer in command of the British party, his troops fled with a degree of determination which appeared to indicate that Madras was the point to which they were bent, and that their speed would not slacken until they arrived there. Their course, however, received a check from encountering Clive, who was advancing with the remainder of the force; but even the influence of this fortunate and popular commander was scarcely sufficient to turn the fugitives from their purpose. With great difficulty and some violence they were at length brought back to the garden, which the enemy immediately abandoned. The French commander being summoned to surrender,

command of the fort granted their request, and thirty men, apparently labouring under great infirmity, were admitted. They had arms concealed under their clothes, and, notwithstanding the alleged ravages of disease, they took the earliest opportunity of convincing their native friends that they had not quite lost the power of using them. In the night, the sick men acknowledged their hospitable reception by rising on the garrison, whom they overpowered, and added Covelong to the list of the French possessions in India.—See *Orme's History*, vol. i. p. 262.

replied in a gasconading strain, declaring that, if the English persisted in the attack, he and his men were determined to die in the breach. Clive resolved to give them the opportunity of redeeming their promise, if so disposed, and proceeded to erect a battery at the distance of about three hundred yards from the fort; but the construction of the work was impeded by the fire of the enemy, of which both Europeans and natives manifested their dislike by taking flight on every alarm. One shot striking a rock which was occupied as an English post, seemed likely to be fatal to the hopes of Clive. The rock being splintered, fourteen men were killed or wounded by the flying fragments; and this mischance had such an effect upon the rest, that it was some time before they could be brought to expose themselves to the danger of similar untoward visitations. The extraordinary regard which these troops manifested for their personal safety was strikingly illustrated in the case of one of the advanced sentries, who, several hours after the alarming accident, was found calmly reposing at the bottom of a dry well. The name of this cautious person is unfortunately not recorded.

Such were the instruments with which Clive had to perform the duty entrusted to him. His own bearing was what it had ever been. Wherever the enemy's fire was hottest, there was Clive, self-possessed and unconcerned as if on parade. So impressive was the lesson conveyed by his cool intrepidity, that it was not without effect even on the debased specimens of manhood whom it was his

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misfortune to command. In the space of two days his example led them to assume some appearance of soldierly feeling, and to perform their duties with some degree of firmness. On the third day he had to march with half his force to meet a party of the enemy from Chingleput, who had advanced within four miles; but these troops seemed to have enjoyed a community of feeling with those of Clive. On his approach they fled with great precipitation. On the following day the battery was finished, but its fire was silenced by a message from the French commander, offering to surrender the place on the single condition of being permitted to carry away his own effects. The offer was immediately accepted, the English marched in, and by this arrangement the French commander was spared the painful task which he had imposed upon himself of dying in the breach. The effects which he had been so anxious to secure by a special condition consisted of turkeys and snuff: the stock in trade of the representative of the French monarchy, who united the business of a huckster with that of his military command. The fall of Covelong restored to the East-India Company fifty pieces of artillery, which they had lost on the capture of Madras. On the following morning a body of the enemy's troops, advancing from Chingleput to relieve the garrison at Covelong, were discovered and attacked by ambuscade. Mistaking the nabob's flag, which was partially white, for their own, they continued to advance with perfect confidence, till a volley from their concealed

assailants struck down a hundred of them, and so paralyzed the remainder that a large proportion did not retain sufficient presence of mind even to run. Two pieces of cannon, and nearly three hundred prisoners, including the commanding officer, were taken. The rest of the detachment, throwing away their arms, fled back to Chingleput, bearing the news of their own discomfiture and of the occupation of Covelong by the British. The receipt of this intelligence was immediately followed by the arrival of Clive, who, with his unvarying promptitude of action, marched to Chingleput, to follow up the blow which the enemy had received. A battery was erected five hundred yards from the wall, but the distance being too great, it was advanced to within two hundred yards. In four days a breach was effected both in the outer and inner walls. The next labour was to fill up the ditches, and this was about to be commenced, when the French commander offered to surrender, if the garrison were permitted to march away with the honours of war. Though the wall had been breached, and the ditches might possibly have been filled up, the place was yet capable of offering a degree of resistance not to be despised by such a force as that at the disposal of Clive. In this view he exercised a sound judgment in agreeing to the terms demanded. No one who has studied the character of Clive will suspect him of declining to fight when there was a fair prospect of gaining any advantage; and the fact that, in this instance, he granted to the garrison the privilege of with-

CHAP. III. drawing from the place, may be regarded as convincing proof that they were in a condition to insist upon it. A pause in the brilliant career of this distinguished commander will now for a time withdraw him from the notice of the reader. His health being greatly impaired, he proceeded to England shortly after the surrender of Chingleput.*

The French garrison evacuated Chingleput on the
A.D. 1752. 31st of October, and marched to Pondicherry. On the 15th of November the troops under Major Lawrence were compelled by the severity of the weather to retire to winter quarters; and the army of Mahomet Ali was, from the same cause, broken up. From Trichinopoly, Morari Row, with the greater part of the Mahrattas departed for Pondicherry. Those who had been led by the success of Major Lawrence to join Mahomet Ali proceeded, under pretence of seeking winter quarters, to meet their countrymen from Trichinopoly. Nunjeraj deeming it necessary to

* The fame of Clive's extraordinary services had ensured to him a flattering reception at home. At a public entertainment given by the Court of Directors of the East-India Company, his health had been proposed in a strain of facetious compliment, as "General Clive:" and on his arrival it was resolved to present him with a sword set with diamonds, of the value of £200, in acknowledgment of "his singular services on the coast of Coromandel." This resolution gave Clive an opportunity of manifesting the strength of his affection for his old commander, Major Lawrence, and declaring his feeling towards that able officer. He objected to receiving the intended mark of distinction, unless a similar compliment were paid to Major Lawrence. The result was creditable to all parties. Clive's views were adopted by the Court of Directors, and Major Lawrence received the honour requested for him by his grateful friend.—See *Malcolm's Life of Clive*, vol. i. pp. 128-131.

account to the British commander for the departure of Morari Row, ascribed it to a dispute that had arisen in the settlement of accounts. He continued, too, to make the warmest professions of friendship for the English, and, as a proof of his sincerity, he caused all provisions coming to Trichinopoly to be intercepted and carried to his own camp. It thus became impossible for the British authorities long to postpone their choice between abandoning the cause of Mahomet Ali or assuming a position of avowed hostility toward Nunjeraj. The base and treacherous means to which the latter had resorted for the purpose of removing Captain Dalton, deprived him of any claim upon the British authorities, and of all right to hope that their mediation should be exerted to procure the fulfilment of that provision of the treaty with Mahomet Ali which stipulated for the surrender of Trichinopoly. It was to be expected, therefore, that the presidency of Madras should decide, as they ultimately did, upon issuing the requisite instructions to treat Nunjeraj as an enemy. CHAP. III.

The first hostile movement on the part of the British took place late in the year 1752, when Captain Dalton, under cover of the night, attacked the camp of Nunjeraj. Orme observes that, if the British had brought with them a petard, they might probably have forced the pagoda, and finished the war by securing the person of the Mysorean commander.* But no result seems to have been con- A.D. 1752

* History, vol. i. page 269.

CHAP. III. templated beyond that of exciting alarm in the enemy's camp, and no other was achieved beyond apprizing Nunjeraj of the precise views of his late ally. This hostile visit was soon returned. Nunjeraj attacked an advanced post which the British had established, and panic seizing the troops stationed to defend it, they were nearly all cut to pieces. The British force was thus deprived of seventy Europeans and about three hundred sepoys, an amount of loss which it was not in a condition to bear. Captain Dalton now regarded the presence of the large body of Mysoreans within the city with apprehension, and the mask of friendship having been dropped on both sides, they were required to depart, their commander only being detained, under the belief, apparently erroneous, that he was the brother of Nunjeraj.

The prospects of the British force in Trichinopoly were becoming extremely gloomy. The Mysorean commander, judging that famine would afford the most probable method of reducing the town, adopted the most rigorous measures for bringing about the result which he desired. All supplies from the adjacent country destined for Trichinopoly were intercepted, and, in conformity with the practice not common in Europe, but said to be of ancient standing in Mysore,* the disapprobation of Nunjeraj was intimated by cutting off the noses of those who ventured to disregard his wishes. The magazines in Trichinopoly had been entrusted to the care of a bro-

* Wilks, vol. i. p. 294. See also Orme's History, vol. i. p. 272.

ther of Mahomet Ali, who had always represented the amount of stores to be abundant. Satisfied with his testimony, Captain Dalton abstained from any personal inspection, until, through the measures of Nunjeraj, both the inhabitants and garrison of Trichinopoly became entirely dependent on the stock of food accumulated within the place. The British commander now learnt with dismay, that the careful and honest administrator of the stores had taken advantage of the growing scarcity in the city to sell at a high price a considerable quantity of the provisions on which reliance was placed for defeating the blockade, and that what remained was only equal to the consumption of a few days.* In this emergency his only hope rested on the assistance of Major Lawrence, to whom a messenger was forthwith dispatched.

The difficulties of Major Lawrence at that time needed no accession. He had left Fort St. David early in January, and proceeded to Trividy, for the purpose of co-operating with Mahomet Ali, to whom Dupleix was still able to offer a degree of resistance which, under the circumstances, was formidable. While the English and the Mysoreans were contending for the possession of Trichinopoly, the prospects of the French had undergone various changes. Ghazi-oo-Deen, the eldest son of Nizam-ool-Moolk, had suddenly given a practical denial to the assertion that he had renounced his right of succession, A. D. 1753.

* According to Orme and Wilks, fifteen days. Major Lawrence says, three weeks.

CHAP. III. by appearing before Aurungabad at the head of an immense army, and proclaiming himself, under the authority of the Mogul emperor, Soobahdar of the Deccan. A vast Mahratta force, acting in concert with him, also entered the province of Golconda, and a proposal was made to Dupleix to withdraw his assistance from Salabat Jung in consideration of great benefits to be bestowed by his rival. On this offer, however, Dupleix was spared the trouble of deliberating, as Salabat Jung found means to remove his brother by poison within a very short period after his arrival at Aurungabad.* His army thereupon dispersed. Dupleix, however, had still sufficient ground for anxiety. Salabat Jung, after the murder of his brother, had manufactured an edict of the Emperor of Delhi confirming Dupleix in the office of nabob. This was dispatched with much parade; and though Dupleix was far too shrewd and too well informed to be deceived by the attempt, he thought it advisable to pretend to be deceived. The mission was received with extraordinary respect, and the important intelligence of which it was the channel was ostentatiously circulated throughout the country occupied by the French. But the alleged favour of the Mogul emperor did not remove the main source of Dupleix's difficulties. He was grievously at a loss for money, which, as Orme observes, "in the wars of Hindostan is of

* It has been questioned whether the death of Ghazi-oo-Deen were not a natural event; but the weight of testimony preponderates in favour of the belief that he died of poison.

more service than any title whatsoever."* To supply this want, he determined to create a new nabob of Arcot, and a person named Murteza Khan, who had the reputation of being extremely rich, was selected for the appointment. It was a distinction which he had long coveted, and which some years before he had taken some pains and incurred some guilt to obtain. Murteza Khan was a relative of Dost Ali, the Nabob of Arcot, under whom the atrocious seizure of Trichinopoly was perpetrated by Chunda Sahib. The nabob was succeeded by his son Subder Ali, who, after overcoming the effects of poison prepared for him by Murteza Khan, fell by the poignard of a Patan assassin, hired for the work by the same person. But Murteza Khan did not secure the prize for which he had twice conspired against the life of his relation. A storm was raised which he had not the courage to encounter, and disguising himself in female attire, he escaped from Arcot to his own fort of Vellore. Two years afterwards, the youthful son and successor of Subder Ali met the fate of his father, and common report attributed to Murteza Khan a principal share in the contrivance of this murder also.† Such was the man to whom the patronage of Dupleix was extended. Murteza Khan, however, notwithstanding his former attempt

* History, vol. i. page 274.

† In reference to this series of transactions, Orme observes, that "the constitution and defects of the government have rendered poisons and assassinations the common method of removing those who stand in opposition to the ambition of others; insomuch that the history of one century in Hindoostan would furnish

CHAP. III. upon the nabobship, displayed little alacrity in securing the honour now tendered him. That honour was indeed to be purchased by the disbursement of part of his wealth, and Murteza Khan was intensely avaricious. The acceptance of it also involved some danger, and Murteza Khan was singularly pusillanimous. The recollection of his former inglorious flight from Arcot would naturally act as a check upon his aspirations to return thither, and Dupleix was long kept in doubt as to his determination. At length Murteza Khan so far overcame his fears for his treasure and his personal safety as to proceed to Pondicherry, where he was solemnly installed in his new dignity; and, greatly to the joy of Dupleix, advanced a considerable sum for the expenses of the war. But Dupleix was not long destined to rejoice in the cooperation of so valuable an ally. The first advance* made by him was also the last. A little explanation of what was expected convinced Murteza Khan that the purchase of the nabobship was an unpromising speculation, and that it would be better to submit to the loss which he had already sustained than to incur the obligations attendant on completing the bargain. He accordingly discovered that his presence was indispensable at Vellore, and forthwith returned thither to repair the loss which his fortune

more examples of this nature than can be found in the history of one half of the kingdoms of Europe since the time of Charlemagne. From the frequency of these enormous practices, even the deaths which happen in the common course of nature are imputed to those who receive immediate advantage from them."

* Stated by Col. Wilks to be a lac of pagodas.

had suffered by his temporary enjoyment of the rank of nabob. CHAP. III.

Dupleix was thus thrown altogether upon his own resources. Though by no means indifferent to the possession of wealth, the desire of accumulation was in him controlled by a passion for securing to himself and his country the ascendant in the field of Indian politics, and his large private fortune was freely dispensed to gratify this passion. He was thus able, in the month of January, to bring into the field five hundred European infantry and sixty horse, together with two thousand sepoys. This force was powerfully aided by a body of four thousand Mahratta cavalry under Morari Row, who dreadfully harassed the British troops under Major Lawrence, that officer being sometimes obliged to march his entire force to Fort St. David to escort his supplies. This state of things the British commander would have been glad to terminate by an engagement, but the French could not be brought to quit their entrenchments, and a successful attack upon their camp was deemed impracticable. A. D. 1753.

The intelligence from Trichinopoly determined Major Lawrence immediately to march with the larger part of his force to its relief. He arrived on the 6th of May, but his army had suffered on its march from the desertion of foreigners, and still more from the oppressive heat of the weather. Several men died on the road, others were sent back to Fort St. David, and on the day of arrival at Trichinopoly one hundred were placed in the hospital. A. D. 1753.

CHAP. III.

After providing for the duties of the garrison, the combined forces of Major Lawrence and Captain Dalton could furnish for the field only five hundred Europeans and two thousand sepoys; and it was soon further diminished by the detachment of seven hundred of the latter in search of provisions. The presence of a body of Mahomet Ali's horse was to be regarded as a source of weakness rather than of strength: always, in the language of Colonel Wilks, "ill paid, ill commanded, spiritless, and mutinous," they now manifested their usual characteristics, and did not even dissemble their dislike to fighting.

Dupleix, fully aware of the importance of counteracting the object of Major Lawrence's march to Trichinopoly, had dispatched thither successive reinforcements; and there were then arrayed there against the British and their ally four hundred Europeans, fifteen hundred sepoys in French pay, three thousand five hundred Mahrattas, eight thousand Mysore horse, twelve hundred Mysore sepoys, and about fifteen thousand irregular infantry; making together nearly thirty thousand men. This disproportion of force was sufficiently dispiriting, and the success of the earlier operations of Major Lawrence was not calculated to dispel the feeling which the comparison engendered.

Previously to the arrival of Major Lawrence, Captain Dalton, by a series of annoying attacks upon the force immediately engaged in maintaining the blockade, had succeeded in frightening them from their position; and, after lingering in the

neighbourhood for a few days, they rejoined the main body in the island of Seringham, thus affording room for the access of supplies to Trichinopoly. But the respite was of short duration. An attempt made by Major Lawrence to force the enemy's position in the island of Seringham failed. He then endeavoured to establish himself in the position from which the enemy had recently withdrawn, and the maintenance of which was so important for securing supplies. But this he was unable to effect; and being compelled to retire nearer the fortress, the enemy were enabled again to interrupt the communication with the country and stop the transit of provisions. In the hope of being able sometimes to evade the vigilance of the blockading force, a post was established at a place called the Golden Rock. This was attacked by a body of the enemy's troops commanded by M. Astruc, a French officer of reputed ability, and, before assistance could be afforded, the sepoys who defended the post were overcome and the French colours hoisted. Major Lawrence, on becoming aware of the attack, put in motion all the troops at his disposal; but some were necessarily left for the protection of the camp, and a considerable number of sepoys had gone into the fort to obtain rations. From these causes, the force with which he marched to the relief of the party on the rock amounted only to about four hundred Europeans and five hundred native troops, aided by a few field-pieces. On observing that the French had succeeded in carrying the rock, the British commander paused.

CHAP. III. Nearly the whole of the vast force opposed to him now met his eye. The rock was covered by the enemy's sepoys, supported by the French battalions. The whole Mysore army was drawn up in the rear. The enemy's artillery was firing from the right and left, and the Mahratta horse were hovering on the flanks and rear of the English, occasionally charging with a view to create confusion. With such a prospect, a pause might well be excused, but it was only momentary. Finding his officers and men alike anxious to engage,* Major Lawrence determined to trust to their enthusiasm, and a party of grenadiers was ordered to march and attack the rock with fixed bayonets. The order was received with three cheers, and the party advancing at a rapid pace, but with the most perfect regularity, neither halted nor gave fire till they reached the summit of the rock; the enemy retreating precipitately down the opposite side. Major Lawrence, with the remainder of his men, moved round the rock and attacked the French battalion in front, while the British grenadiers on the rock, with a select party of sepoys who had followed, poured a heavy fire upon its right flank. Thus assailed, the French troops began to waver, and a charge by the English bayonets completed their dismay. They fled with the utmost precipitation, leaving three field-pieces in the hands of the victors. The English had yet, however, a difficult task to

* The soldiers, says Orme, "seemed delighted at the opportunity of having what they called a fair knock at the Frenchmen on the plain."

perform in returning safely to the camp in the face of such overpowering numbers; but this, notwithstanding some attempts of the enemy's cavalry to prevent it, was effected.

Brilliant as was the success of the British arms, the numbers of the enemy's troops were so great, that no reasonable expectation of ultimate success could be entertained, unless reinforcements from some quarter could be procured. Major Lawrence observes that a victory or two more would have left all his men on the plains of Trichinopoly.* In the hope of obtaining the fulfilment of promises of assistance often made by the Rajah of Tanjore, it was resolved that Major Lawrence should proceed in the direction of that country accompanied by Mahomet Ali. The latter personage left his palace under an escort of English bayonets designed to guard him, not from the enemy, but from his own troops, who assembled in the outer court and declared their intention not to permit his departure until their arrears of pay were discharged. Of the vast host which the nabob nominally commanded, exactly fifty accompanied him towards Tanjore. The rest remained a few days under the walls of Trichinopoly, when they went over to the enemy in a body, having previously communicated their intention to Captain Dalton, and requested as a parting favour that he would not fire on them. That officer, glad to be rid of them upon any terms, made them happy by promising not to interfere with their movements; and

* Narrative, page 48.

CHAP. III. the gallant body retired at noon-day, without an effort on the part of their English allies to detain or annoy them.

The object of Major Lawrence in marching towards Tanjore was effected. He obtained from the sovereign of that country the assistance of three thousand horse and two thousand foot, under the command of Monackjee. He was also at this time reinforced by about one hundred and seventy men who had just arrived from England, and by three hundred native troops. Thus strengthened, he again approached Trichinopoly, but found the whole force of the enemy prepared to dispute his return thither. Having a convoy of several thousand bullocks, it would have been desirable to avoid an action, but this being impracticable, the requisite dispositions were made for an engagement, which terminated in favour of the English. The fears or the ill judgment of one of their officers had nearly endangered their success, when the gallant bearing of Major Lawrence retrieved it. A favourable opportunity being presented for attacking a body of the French which had halted imprudently, a party was dispatched for the purpose; but the officer appointed to lead it sent word that he could not proceed without artillery, and that he was halting until its arrival. The answer of Major Lawrence was given in person. Putting his horse into a gallop, he rode up to the party, and dismounting, placed himself at its head. His example was nobly followed: the enemy shrunk from the bayonets of the English grenadiers, and

the main body moving to aid the party led by Major Lawrence, the fate of the day was determined. The enemy, however, carried off one prize, of which they made an extraordinary use. This was the palanquin of the English commander, which being carried to Pondicherry, was there paraded through the town in triumphant confirmation of a report assiduously circulated, that the French had been successful in a battle in which Major Lawrence was killed.*

A few weeks afterwards a more decisive advantage was gained. Both armies had been in the meantime reinforced, but that of the enemy in by far the largest proportion. The recent success of Major Lawrence was, however, calculated to inspire confidence, and his situation with regard to supplies required a bold and active course. He thought it advisable to engage while he could be "master of his own dispositions."† The result of this determination was a brilliant victory, in which M. Anstruc and several other officers‡ were made prisoners, and the whole of the tents and stores of the enemy captured. The fall of Weyconda, a place of some strength, shortly followed. On this occasion, the European and native troops seemed to vie with each other in daring courage and devotedness of spirit. The British sepoys could not be restrained by their officers from attempting to enter the breach though

* Major Lawrence's Narrative, p. 51. † Ibid. p. 52.

‡ Major Lawrence says nine; Orme, ten. Col. Wilks states the number to be eleven, including M. Anstruc, thus agreeing with Orme.

CHAP. III. assured that it was not yet practicable, and repeated attempts were made to ascend under a most galling fire from the enemy above. Baffled in their efforts, they rushed to the gate, which some endeavoured to force, while others fired upwards upon those engaged on the ramparts. At length an Englishman, acting as serjeant in a company of sepoys, mounting the shoulders of one of the men, succeeded in laying hold of the carved work of the gateway, and thus assisted climbed to the top. Those behind handed up to him the colours of his company, which, unaided, he planted on the parapet. About twenty of the company, following the example of the serjeant, were enabled to join him by the employment of similar means with himself; and while some of this heroic band were engaged with the enemy, others descended on the inside of the rampart and opened the gate, through which the rest of the assailing party rushed like a torrent.

Soon after the capture of Weyconda, Major Lawrence took up quarters for the rainy season about fifteen miles from Trichinopoly, the Tanjore troops having previously returned home. Here, on the 28th of November, they received news of an attack made by the French on Trichinopoly. The attempt was unexpected, the garrison in a great degree taken by surprise; and could the French have abstained from firing, it is not improbable that the place might have been carried. But the first shot brought all to their posts, and the French were driven back with a loss of Europeans estimated at five hundred men.*

* Wilks's History, vol. i. page 307.

A long interval of comparative repose which succeeded was broken by a serious disaster to the English arms. In the early part of the month of February, a party of European and native troops, engaged in the conveyance of stores, were surprised and defeated with great loss. One of the most lamentable consequences was the destruction of the gallant company of grenadiers who had contributed so largely to their country's honour and success: of whom Orme observes, that "they may be said, without exaggeration, to have rendered more service than the same number of troops belonging to any nation in any part of the world."*

CHAP. III.

A.D. 1754.

Before this event, an attempt had been made by the representatives of the French and English East-India Companies to negotiate; but after several days had been consumed in profitless discussion, they separated without a single step being gained towards reconciliation. But the year was not to close without a renewal of proceedings for pacification conducted under different auspices. The extraordinary position of the French and English in the East had been forced on the attention of the respective governments at home; and the resolution to dispatch a British squadron with reinforcements induced the French to consent to an arrangement for the settlement of the disputes between the two countries, by commissioners to be deputed for the purpose. The negotiations were to be conducted on the spot where the dispute had arisen, and it might have been expected

* Orme's History, vol. i. page 345.

CHAP. III. that Dupleix would have been continued by the French government as its representative. This, however, was not the fact. He was superseded by the appointment of M. Godheu, who arrived at Pondicherry on the 2nd of August, and proclaimed his commission.* The first result was a suspension of arms for three months, which commenced on the A. D. 1754. 11th of October. On the 14th of that month Dupleix departed for Europe.†

Towards the close of the year a treaty was concluded, subject to confirmation in Europe; and on A. D. 1755. the 11th of January following a truce was agreed upon, till the pleasure of the European authorities should be known. In the meantime every thing was to remain on the footing of *uti possidetis*. By the treaty both parties were restrained from interfering in

* Orme says that the removal of Dupleix took place without any application from the English government, and he ascribes this measure to a conviction that Dupleix was not a man to be trusted with such a commission. Dupleix alleged that it was stipulated that the governors on both sides should be removed, but as Mr. Saunders, the governor of Madras, was continued in office, and managed the negotiation on the part of the English without any objection from the French, this does not appear probable.

† From the accounts which he rendered to the Company, it appeared that, from his private estate and from money borrowed on his personal security, he had disbursed for the public service three millions of rupees. The French East-India Company refused to pay any part of this sum, on the ground of M. Dupleix having incurred expense without authority; and a suit at law, commenced to enforce his claim, was stopped by royal interdict. The persons from whom he had borrowed money were, however, treated with the same measure of justice; for while denied the power of prosecuting his own claims, Dupleix was favoured with letters of protection from his creditors.

the disputes of native princes, but by the articles of truce they engaged to oblige their allies to observe the provisions of the treaty, and in case of contumacy, to enforce compliance by arms. The commander of the Mysoreans, however, denying the right of the French to conclude any treaty for him, continued to prosecute his favourite scheme of getting possession of Trichinopoly, till, alarmed by the reported approach to his frontier of a body of Mahrattas to levy contributions, and by the simultaneous advance of Salabat Jung to demand the Mogul's tribute, he suddenly decamped.

The English continued to aid Mahomet Ali in collecting his revenues and reducing his refractory vassals to obedience. This perhaps was not in strict accordance with the letter of the treaty with the French, but the latter, under M. Bussy, were rendering similar assistance to Salabat Jung. In Madura and Tinnevelly, the operations of the English were attended with little success and still less honour; and an attempt to coerce into obedience the notorious Murteza Khan was met by an intimation from the governor of Pondicherry, that it was regarded as an infraction of the treaty and would be dealt with accordingly. The attempt was thereupon abandoned.

The services of the fleet which had arrived from England under the command of Admiral Watson, not being required for any other object, were employed in the suppression of a system of piracy which for nearly fifty years had been a source of

CHAP. III. serious annoyance to the trade on the coast of Malabar. It was carried on by a family bearing the name of Angria, the founder of which had been the commander of the Mahratta fleet, and who, availing himself of the opportunities which the events of the times threw in his way, obtained the grant of certain forts and districts convenient for the exercise of the trade of piracy, and established a petty sovereignty. His descendants failing in their allegiance to the Peishwa, that potentate united with the English to

A. D. 1755. chastise them. Early in 1755, a small British force commanded by Commodore James attacked and captured Severndroog, one of the forts of Toolajee Angria, and also the island of Bancoot. The Peishwa's fleet were to have assisted in the enterprise, but they never ventured within gun-shot of the fort. In

A. D. 1756. February following, Admiral Watson sailed with the fleet under his command to attack Gheriah, the principal harbour and strong-hold of the pirates. In this service he was aided by Clive, who had recently arrived at Bombay from England, with a force intended to be employed against the French in the Deccan, but which, from the change of circumstances that had taken place, was now at liberty for any other service. The Mahrattas were to co-operate in the attack on Gheriah, but the allies seem to have been quite as desirous of outwitting each other as of overcoming the enemy. Both parties meditated an exclusive appropriation of the booty which was anticipated, and both took much pains to attain their object. The English were successful. The

place fell into their hands, and their Mahratta friends were disappointed of the expected prize.* CHAP. III.

* The booty, when secured by the English, gave rise to fresh contentions between the sea and land services, and the entire proceedings on the subject are little creditable to those engaged in them. Sir John Malcolm, while endeavouring to account and in some degree to apologize for the zeal displayed on this and similar occasions, does not hesitate to advert to "that spirit of plunder and that passion for the rapid accumulation of wealth which actuated all ranks."—*Life of Clive*, vol. i. page 135. The two principal officers, however, seem to have been guided by a more generous spirit than that which influenced their inferiors. A larger share of the booty was claimed for Clive than the naval officers were prepared to yield. Admiral Watson resisted Clive's claim, but proposed to make up the deficiency from his own share, and actually sent the money. Clive, while he expressed himself sensible of the Admiral's generosity and disinterestedness, firmly though courteously declined his offer.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAP. IV.

A. D. 1756.

Clive had returned to India with the appointment of Governor of Fort St. David. Thither he proceeded, when his services were no longer required on the western coast, and in the month of June formally entered on the duties of his office. But in this comparatively quiet post he had not remained quite two months, when the aid of his military talents was called for in a part of India where they had never yet been exercised.

Aliverdi Khan, Soubahdar of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, had died in the month of April. He was succeeded by Mirza Mahmood, better known by his assumed name of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, who appears to have stood to Aliverdi Khan in the double relationship of grandnephew and grandson. Aliverdi Khan had been the architect of his own greatness, and his career was not unstained by crime; but his talents were considerable, his habits of life grave, and his government as free from oppression as was consistent with the maintenance of an Oriental despotism. It has been said that he was "perhaps the only prince in the East whom none of his subjects wished to assassinate."* The

* Orme's History, vol. ii. page 46.

character of his successor was widely different. His intellect was feeble, his habits low and depraved, his propensities vicious in the extreme. From a child he had been sullen, capricious, and cruel. His education afforded no corrective of these evil dispositions, but, on the contrary, tended to foster them. He was the idol of the prince to whom he was destined to succeed; and through the doating fondness of age his early years were passed amidst unbounded indulgence. Such a training, operating upon such a nature as that of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, produced the result which might have been anticipated. His advance towards manhood was marked by a corresponding advance in vice. His companions were selected from the lowest and basest of mankind, and with these congenial associates his days and nights were passed amidst every species of intemperance.

Aliverdi Khan had occasionally called upon the English to contribute to replenish his treasury. These demands were sometimes refused, and the refusal was followed by the stoppage of trade. But the Soubahdar was an intelligent prince, and knew the value of European commerce too well to destroy it. The disputes which arose never proceeded to extremities, and the English, on the whole, found little reason to complain. The death of Aliverdi Khan, and the accession of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, made an important difference in their position. The new Soubahdar was known to entertain unfavourable views towards the English. It has been said, indeed, that his predecessor, notwithstanding

CHAP. IV. the great moderation of his government, shared those views, and that his last advice to his grandson was to deprive the English of military power.* But whether the hatred of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah were stimulated by the advice of his grandfather, or left to its own operation, it is certain that, at a very early period after his accession to power, it was actively manifested.

The subordinate government of Dacca had been administered by an uncle of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, who had died a short time before Aliverdi Khan. His dewan, or treasurer, not deeming his family or his property safe in Dacca, had sent them away under the care of his son, named Kishindoss, who had solicited and found a temporary refuge in Calcutta. This gave offence to Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, who endeavoured, but without effect, to persuade Aliverdi Khan that the English were actuated by hostile feelings towards him. The death of his grandfather relieved him from restraint, and immediately after that event he addressed a letter to the President of Calcutta, requiring that Kishindoss should be given up. But this letter was forwarded in a manner so extraordinary as to warrant suspicion of its authenticity. The bearer, disguised as a pedlar, came in a small boat, and on landing proceeded to the house of a native, named Omichund, by whom he was introduced to the British authorities. Omichund, who was the richest merchant in Calcutta, had been

* Holwell's Tracts, page 286. See also Orme's History, vol. ii. page 83.

largely engaged in providing the Company's investments, and from this occupation a great portion of his wealth had been derived. But of this source of profit he had been for some years deprived, in consequence of some dissatisfaction which had arisen with the quality of the goods, and which had led to the employment of factors by the Company to purchase at the provincial markets. The British council appear on this account to have viewed the alleged communication from Sooraj-oo-Dowlah with increased distrust, and to have regarded it as a contrivance of Omichund to give himself importance. The messenger was accordingly dismissed without an answer. It was not long before another communication from Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was received on a different subject. He had heard that the English were strengthening their fortifications, and he required them to desist. An answer was returned, in part denying the truth of the report which had reached the prince, and in part justifying the proceedings which he ascribed to the English authorities, on the ground of apprehended hostilities with the French. This letter threw the Soubahdar into a transport of rage; and although then actually on his march to reduce a refractory dependent to obedience, he abandoned this object in order to turn his arms against the English. He forthwith presented himself before the English factory at Cossimbazar, which immediately surrendered without an effort being made to defend it.

The news of the fall of Cossimbazar was received at Calcutta with feelings of dismay. The garrison

CHAP. IV. did not amount to two hundred; not more than a third of their number were Europeans, and few if any had ever been in action. In addition to the regular troops in garrison, Calcutta boasted a militia formed from the European and native inhabitants; but so little attention had been given to training this force, that when called out, it is said, there were scarcely any among them "who knew the right from the wrong end" of their muskets.* The works were altogether inadequate to sustain a protracted siege, and had they been of greater strength little would have been gained, as the stock of provisions within the place was not more than equal to a few weeks' consumption of its crowded population.† The supply of ammunition would not have sufficed for three days' expenditure, if in a good condition, and great part of it was spoiled by damp. There was hardly a carriage that would bear a gun, and numerous pieces of cannon were lying useless under the walls.‡ Assistance was naturally sought from Madras and Bombay; but, with the use of ordinary expedition on the part of the Soubahdar, it was obviously impossible that any could arrive in time to save Calcutta from falling into the hands of the enemy. Application for aid was made to the Dutch and French authorities, but from neither was any obtained. The answer of the Dutch was an un-

* Holwell's India Tracts, page 302.

† Evidence of Mr. Cook, in First Report of the Committee of House of Commons, 1772.

‡ Cook's Evidence and Holwell's India.

qualified refusal. The French, less dogged, but more insolent, offered to join the English, if the latter would quit Calcutta and remove their garrison and effects to the French settlement of Chandernagore.

In the meantime the Soubahdar was advancing, and the celerity of his movements relieved the English from the perplexities of long suspense. Within a very few days after the fall of Cossimbazar became known, the enemy's guns were heard at Calcutta. The usual method of calming the angry feelings of eastern princes was resorted to. A sum of money was tendered in purchase of the Soubahdar's absence, but refused. Some show of resistance followed, but there was little more than show. The means of defence were indeed small; but had they been greater, they would probably have been vain from their being no one competent to direct them effectually. Some of the military officers, and among them those of the highest rank, are represented as notoriously incompetent, and their deficiencies were not counterbalanced by the wisdom or vigour of the civil authorities. It is a small reproach to the civil and commercial servants of the Company, that they were generally deficient in military knowledge and skill; but many of them seem to have been no less deficient in energy, presence of mind, and a regard to the most obvious demands of duty. The natural result was, that while the thunder of the enemy roared without, insubordination, division, and distraction were aiding him within. All authority seems to have been at

CHAP. IV. an end. "From the time," says an eye-witness, "that we were confined to the defence of the fort itself, nothing was to be seen but disorder, riot, and confusion. Everybody was officious in advising, but no one was properly qualified to give advice."* In such circumstances, the expediency of abandoning the fort and retreating on shipboard naturally occurred to the besieged, and such a retreat might have been made without dishonour. But the want of concert, together with the criminal eagerness manifested by some of the principal servants of the Company to provide for their own safety at any sacrifice, made the closing scene of the siege one of the most disgraceful in which Englishmen have ever

A.D. 1756. been engaged. On the 18th of June, it was resolved to remove the female residents at Calcutta, and such effects as could conveniently be carried away, to a ship lying before the fort. In the night the general retreat was to take place. Two civil servants, named Manningham and Frankland, volunteered to superintend the embarkation of the females, and having on this pretence quitted the scene of danger, refused to return. Others followed their example, and escaped to the ship, which in the evening weighed anchor and dropped down the river, followed by every other vessel of any size at the station. In the morning no means of escape were available, except two small boats which still remained at the wharf. These were eagerly seized by parties of panic-struck

* Cook's Evidence in First Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1772.

fugitives, and among those who thus departed were Mr. Drake, the Governor, and the Commandant, Captain Minchin. Abandoned by those whose especial duty it was to protect them, the devoted community proceeded to take measures for establishing some authority in place of that so unworthily renounced. The senior member of council remaining in the fort waved his claim, and Mr. Holwell, another member, assumed the command with the full consent of all parties. No expectation was entertained of preventing the ultimate fall of the place; the only object in view was to defend it until a retreat could be made, and a Company's ship which had been stationed up the river would, it was anticipated, afford the means of escape. Orders were sent to bring the ship as near the fort as was practicable, and the commander proceeded to carry them into effect; but the pilot, infected by the dastardly feeling which had overcome so many of his superiors, lost his presence of mind, and ran the ship aground. There was now no hope but in the considerate feelings of those who had fled from their companions, still exposed to dangers which they had refused to share. Ignobly as they had abandoned their proper duties, it could not be believed that, when the consciousness of personal safety had calmed their agitation and time had afforded opportunity for reflection, they would coolly surrender a large body of their countrymen to the mercy of a despot, whose naturally cruel disposition was inflamed by the most savage hatred of the English. To the hope

CHAP. IV. of succour from this quarter the inmates of the besieged fort naturally turned when all other failed. For two days after the flight of the governor and those who accompanied him, the defence of the place was maintained with little skill indeed, but with considerable perseverance. For two entire days did the besieged throw up signals, calling upon their fugitive companions to assist them in escaping the dangers which those companions had feared so much, that they had sacrificed even honour to safety. For two entire days did the fugitives look upon those signals, while the flames which burst from all parts of the town testified still more amply to the distress of their countrymen, and the continued firing of the enemy told of their increasing danger, without making a single effort to answer the calls upon their humanity or to interpose the slightest assistance. One who had given minute attention to the subject observes, that "a single sloop with fifteen brave men on board might, in spite of all the efforts of the enemy, have come up, and anchoring under the fort, have carried away all"* who remained to become a tyrant's captives; but even fifteen brave men were wanting for the duty.

The enemy entered, and the Company's servants, civil and military, by consequence became prisoners. They had at first no reason to apprehend any great severity of treatment, the Soubahdar having assured Mr. Holwell, "on the word of a soldier," that no harm should come to them.† Harm, however, did come,

* Orme's History, vol. ii. p. 78. † Holwell's Tracts, p. 389.

CHAP. IV.

whether by the contrivance of the Soubahdar or of some of his dependents. Difficulty was found or pretended in discovering a proper place of security, and, after some search, a room attached to the barracks, which had been used for the confinement of military offenders, was selected for the purpose. The dimensions of this place were eighteen feet by fourteen.* On three sides there was no provision for the admission of air or light; on the fourth were two small windows secured by iron bars; but these, it is represented, from their position not being to the windward, could admit little air,† an evil aggravated by the overhanging of a low verandah. Within a space thus confined and ill ventilated, on a sultry night in the sultriest season of the year, were immured one hundred and forty-six human beings, a vast majority being Europeans, to whose northern constitutions the oppressive climate of Bengal could scarcely be made supportable by the aid of every resource that art could suggest, and several of them suffering from the effects of recent wounds. Few of the persons knew any thing of the place; those who did could not at first persuade themselves that their guards seriously proposed to shut up such numbers in that narrow prison, or they might perhaps, as one of the survivors afterwards declared, have preferred to encounter instant death, by rushing on the swords of the soldiers, to

* Cooke's Evidence in First Report of Select Committee of House of Commons.

† Holwell's Tracts, page 392.

CHAP. IV. the lingering torture which awaited them. When at length they perceived the horrors of their situation, an offer of a thousand rupees was made to an officer of the guard if he would procure the removal of part of the prisoners to another place. He withdrew, but returned with an answer that it was impossible. The offer was doubled, and the man again withdrew; but he returned only to disappoint the hope of relief, if any hope existed, by declaring that the desired change could not be effected without the orders of the Soubahdar; that he was asleep, and none dared to wake him. Of the horrors of the night which succeeded, no words can raise an adequate conception. The heat and thirst soon became intolerable; and though resistance to the fate that impended seemed useless, to yield to it calmly was more than could be expected from human nature. The rapidly sinking strength of the sufferers was exhausted and their torments aggravated by frantic struggles with each other to gain a position near the windows, or to obtain a few drops of the water with which their guards, more in mockery than in mercy, scantily supplied them through the grating. In these dreadful contests, some were beaten down and trampled to death—while, in the more remote parts of the room, the work of the destroyer was in fearful progress through the overpowering heat and the vitiated condition of the air—and happy might they be esteemed whose sufferings were thus shortened. Of the remainder, some were in a state of delirium; others rapidly advancing to

that state, but, still retaining a consciousness of the scene and circumstances around them, strove by insult and abuse to provoke the guards to fire on them. At length the morning came, and with it an order for bringing out the prisoners. The execution of the mandate was impeded by the piles of dead which blocked up the doorway; an obstacle which it required some time to remove. Those in whom the spark of life was not extinct then came forth, once again to inhale the pure air of heaven. Their number was twenty-three:* of these several were soon after carried off by putrid diseases, the consequence of the cruelty to which they had been subjected.

The precise share of the Soubahdar in this atrocious transaction is not ascertainable. One of the sufferers† believed that the orders were only general, and amounted to no more than that the prisoners should be secured. He attributes the barbarity with which they were enforced to the soldiers entrusted with their execution, and it is certain that the horrors of the Black Hole afforded them entertainment. "They took care," says Holwell, "to keep us supplied with water that they might have the satisfaction of seeing us fight for it, as they phrased it, and held up lights to the bars that they might lose no part of their inhuman diversion." Another‡ of the prisoners seems to have thought that the

* So stated by Holwell, India Tracts, page 418.—Cooke, (Evidence before Select Committee of the House of Commons,) says twenty-two. Both were among the prisoners thus confined.

† Holwell.

‡ Cooke.

CHAP. IV. orders were specific as to the place of confinement, but that they were issued in ignorance of its small dimensions. But these apologetic suggestions, however creditable to the generosity of the sufferers, can do little to relieve the character of the man under whose authority this wholesale murder of prisoners took place. The character of the officers of a government is in a great measure determined by that of those whom they serve; and if the servants of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah exercised any discretion in the choice of a prison, it may safely be concluded that their choice was made under a full impression that it would not be disagreeable to their master. The subsequent conduct of the Soubahdar shews that such a belief would have been well warranted. When Mr. Holwell was admitted to his presence on the morning after the murder, exhibiting on his person painful evidence of the sufferings of the night,* the Soubahdar expressed neither regret for the horrors that had occurred, nor displeasure at the conduct of those who had been the direct instruments of producing them; but harshly interrupted Mr. Holwell's attempt to describe them by a demand

* He was in a state of high fever, unable to walk or to support himself without assistance. His endeavours to speak were vain till water was given him. On his way to the royal presence, a jemadar, who assisted in supporting him, threatened that unless he confessed where the treasure was buried in the fort, he should in half an hour be blown from the mouth of a cannon. "The intimation," says Holwell, "gave me no manner of concern, for at that juncture I should have esteemed death the greatest favour the tyrant could have bestowed upon me."—*Tracts*, page 405.

for the treasure supposed to be concealed. But the probability is, that the Soubahdar had himself made or sanctioned the selection of the Black Hole as the place of confinement, for when the miserable prisoners besought that they might be relieved by the removal of part of their number to some other place, their prayer was unavailing, because it could not be granted without the express orders of the Soubahdar, whose sleep no one dared to disturb for so trivial a purpose as the preservation from death of nearly one hundred and fifty human beings. That he was ignorant of the inadequacy of the place to receive so many prisoners is no excuse, seeing that his ignorance was voluntary, and might have been removed without delay, inconvenience, or danger. It was his duty to assure himself that, in committing his prisoners to safe custody, he was not consigning them to death; and his want of knowledge of their situation, if it existed, was the result of his want of interest. He knew not because he cared not.

"All was lost," says Orme, "before the presidency of Madras even received intelligence of the danger." The surrender of Cossimbazar was not known there until the 15th of July. Disturbances with the native princes were too common to excite much surprise, and it was supposed that the attack upon Cossimbazar was the result of a temporary outbreak either of jealousy or avarice, and that the wrath of the hostile prince would in due time be appeased in the usual way by a present. It was, notwithstanding, thought advisable to strengthen

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the British establishment in Bengal, and Major Kilpatrick was dispatched thither with two hundred and thirty troops, mostly Europeans. On the 5th of August news arrived of the fall of Calcutta, which "scarcely created more horror and resentment than consternation and perplexity."*

Part of the council were opposed to sending any large force to Bengal, from a fear of diminishing the security of the English interests on the coast of Coromandel, and desired to try the effect of negotiation. This line of policy was strenuously resisted by Orme, the celebrated historian, then a member of the council of Madras. He maintained the necessity of dispatching such a force as should be sufficient to act with vigour and effect against the Soubahdar, and, after much opposition, his advice prevailed.† To carry it into effect the co-operation of Admiral Watson, with the squadron under his command, was requested. This was readily granted; but a difficulty was started as to the disposal of the captures which might be made by the fleet. This was no sooner arranged than other difficulties arose out of the questions, who should command the land forces—what should be the extent of the general's authority—his military and diplomatic powers—in what rela-

* Orme.

† Orme records the advice given by himself on this occasion, and the opposition which he had to encounter, but with characteristic modesty he speaks of himself only as "one of the members of council, who, having resided nine years in the Company's service at Calcutta, knew the strength and insolence of the Moorish government in Bengal."

tion he should stand to the late governor and council of Calcutta,—and how far their authority should be maintained or reduced? More than six weeks had intervened before the fall of Calcutta was known at Madras; more than two months was subsequently consumed in disputes.

Mr. Pigot, the governor of Madras, was desirous of undertaking the command of the expedition, but he was without military experience, and claimed more extensive powers than his associates in the government felt justified in granting, and they declined to gratify him. The next claim was made by Colonel Aldercron, who was at Madras in command of one of the king's regiments, but his want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of Indian warfare was regarded as disqualifying him for the duty; and another objection to his being entrusted with it was grounded on his being independent of the Company's servants, and little disposed to recognise their authority. Colonel Lawrence was in every way qualified for the command, and would, without doubt, have been nominated to it, had he not been incapacitated by the state of his health. It would have been strange if in this emergency Clive should have been forgotten. Orme had the credit of suggesting him as the leader of the expedition, and the proposal being warmly approved by Clive's early and undeviating friend, Colonel Lawrence, was finally adopted. The powers of the former governor and council of Calcutta, in civil and commercial affairs, were preserved to them, but in all military matters Clive

CHAP. IV. was to be entirely independent. This was strongly objected to by Mr. Manningham—a member of the council of Calcutta, a gentleman who boasted the unenviable distinction of having been foremost in the disgraceful flight from that place, and who had been deputed by the fugitives on a mission to Madras. His remonstrances, without doubt, received all the attention which the firmness of his character demanded, but they were ineffectual.

The troops destined for the expedition amounted to nine hundred Europeans and fifteen hundred sepoys. The squadron under Admiral Watson consisted of five ships. In these and in five transports the forces were embarked; but, when on the point of departure, they were deprived of the royal artillery and of the king's guns and stores by the pertinacious refusal of Col. Aldercron to suffer them to proceed unless he had the command. These were conse-
A.D. 1756. quently disembarked. On the 16th of October the expedition sailed from Madras, and on the 20th of December all the ships except two, after encountering some disasters, had arrived at Fulta, a village on the Hooghly, at some distance from Calcutta, at which the British authorities had re-assembled when beginning to recover from the effects of their panic. The absence of the two missing ships seriously diminished the efficiency of the force. One of them, the *Cumberland*, which bore the flag of Admiral Pocock the second in command, was the largest in the squadron, and had on board two hundred and fifty of the European troops: the other, a Company's ship,

named the *Marlborough*, contained the greater part of the field-artillery. The detachment under Major Kilpatrick, which had been dispatched from Madras on the arrival of the news of the fall of Cossimbazar, was at Fulta, but, having suffered dreadfully from the effects of long encampment upon swampy ground, was not in a condition to add materially to the strength of the British force. Of two hundred and thirty men who had originally composed it, one-half had perished, and of those who survived only thirty were fit for duty. Reinforcements were expected from Bombay, but Clive determined to wait neither for them nor for the arrival of the two ships which had been separated from the rest of the fleet, but to advance at once upon Calcutta.

The reduction of that place had been regarded by Sooraj-oo-Dowlah as the most glorious achievement performed in India since the days of Timour.* The conquest was announced at Delhi by letters magnifying its importance, and dwelling with equal diffuseness and complacency on the glory of the conqueror. But, though satiated with honour, Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was in other respects grievously disappointed. He had imagined Calcutta one of the richest places in the world, and had anticipated immense wealth from its plunder. Now that the prize was in his possession, he found that he had greatly over-estimated its value. Most of the inhabitants had removed their property in contemplation of the Soubahdar's visit, and the season of the year was one in which no large

* Orme, vol. ii. page 79.

CHAP. IV. stock of merchandize was accumulated at Calcutta. The treasury of Omichund furnished about four lacs* of rupees, besides some valuable effects; and merchandize to the amount of about two hundred thousand pounds, the property of other parties, fell into the hands of the invaders. The soldiers having appropriated so much of this as they were able to conceal, and the officers appointed to superintend the plunder having provided for themselves as far as they imagined they might with impunity, the remainder formed a solid appendage to the abounding glory in which Sooraj-oo-Dowlah rejoiced. Mr. Holwell and other servants of the Company were treated with great cruelty, in the expectation that they might thereby be brought to discover some concealed treasure; but as none existed, no revelation of the place of its concealment could be made; and the Soubahdar having left in Calcutta a garrison of three thousand men, quitted it with little gain in any respect, except of self-satisfaction. His disappointed feelings found consolation in hostile messages to the French and Dutch, both of whom he threatened to extirpate unless they immediately contributed to the replenishment of his treasury. They endeavoured to soothe him by professions of respect and attachment, but the Soubahdar did not choose to be paid in such currency; and, after some hesitation, the Dutch were obliged to purchase his forbearance by the contribution of four lacs and a-half of rupees, while the French obtained the like favour by the pay-

* About £40,000.

ment of three lacs and a-half. The better terms accorded to the latter were in consideration of their having furnished the Soubahdar, when on his march to Calcutta, with two hundred chests of gunpowder, a service which the prince was too grateful to forget, even when engaged in plundering those to whom he was indebted for it. Thus, neither Dutch nor French had much reason to rejoice in the success of the policy which had restrained them from affording aid to the English.

From the view which Sooraj-oo-Dowlah took of his own military genius and its results, he had never contemplated the probability of any attempt on the part of the English to recover that which they had lost. Indeed, had he been correct in his estimate of the population of that division of the earth within which England lies, and of which it forms a very small part, he might have been justified in the proud contempt which he displayed for his enemies, for it was the belief of this prince that "there were not ten thousand men in all Europe!!"* Yet the loss of the trade carried on by a small fraction of this scantily peopled portion of the globe was seriously felt in the diminution of the revenues of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and he was meditating the grant of permission to the English to return under severe restrictions, when this exercise of his clemency was arrested by intelligence that they had returned without invitation in great force, and were advancing upon their old settlement. The whole army of the Soubahdar was

* Orme, vol. ii. page 120.

CHAP. IV. forthwith ordered to assemble at Moorshedabad, the capital of his dominions, for the purpose of resisting the daring strangers. In the meantime dispositions had been made for defending Calcutta by the officer in command there, who, says Orme, "had no courage but much circumspection." To this person letters were forwarded from Clive and Admiral Watson, addressed to the Soubahdar. They were open, and the cautious officer, after ascertaining their character, declared that he dared not send letters written in such menacing terms.

A.D. 1756. On the 27th December the fleet left Fulta, and the next day anchored at Moidapore, where the troops were disembarked for the purpose of marching to attack Budge-Budge, a fort of some strength about ten miles distant. The march thither was one of dreadful fatigue, and occupied sixteen hours. The country was such as could not be traversed, under the most favourable circumstances, without extreme labour, and the troops on this occasion had not only to encounter the difficulties which it presented to their own passage, but also to draw two field-pieces and a tumbril loaded with ammunition. This arose from the continued apprehensions of the council at Fulta, who, clinging to their first fear with more than martyr's stedfastness, did not venture to provide a single beast either of draught or burden, lest they should incur the Soubahdar's resentment. After such a march, it may well be believed that the troops stood in need of rest; but unfortunately they resigned themselves to it without

taking the common precaution of stationing sentinels to guard against surprise.* Monichund, the governor of Calcutta, was in the neighbourhood with a force of upwards of three thousand horse and foot. He was apprized of the movement of the English, and about an hour after they had laid down to sleep commenced an attack. Clive's intrepidity and presence of mind succeeded in averting the danger so negligently incurred. He promptly made the necessary dispositions for repulsing the enemy, which were executed with precision and effect. The enemy were driven from the posts which they had occupied, but still seemed prepared to contest the fortune of the day, till a shot passing near the turban of Monichund so astounded that gallant commander, that he instantly turned his elephant and fled with his whole force. In extenuation of the carelessness which had nearly proved fatal to the English cause, it has been urged that the English had but recently landed, that Clive was ill, and that he must have depended upon others for intelligence.† These circumstances will excuse him for not knowing that an enemy was near, but they furnish no apology for neglecting an ordinary precaution.

Although the British troops were in this affair taken at a disadvantage, the result seems to have impressed the enemy with a conviction that they were not to be despised. The following day was

* This would appear almost incredible, but it is distinctly stated by Orme.

† Malcolm's Life of Clive, vol. i. Note on page 154.

CHAP. IV. fixed for an assault on Budge-Budge, but in the evening a drunken sailor belonging to the British squadron having straggled to the ditch, crossed it, and scrambled over the ramparts. Finding no sentinels, he shouted to the advanced guard of the British force that he had taken the fort, and on their proceeding to join him, it was found that the place was evacuated. Monichund returned to Calcutta, but remained there only a few hours, when leaving a garrison of five hundred men, he went away with the rest of his force to Hooghly, "where," says Orme, "having likewise communicated his own terrors, he proceeded to carry them to the Nabob at Moorshedabad."

Calcutta, after the discharge of a few shots, was A. D. 1757. abandoned to the English, who, on the 2nd January, once more became masters of the place from which a few months before they had been so ignominiously expelled. But the want of an enemy did not ensure peace. The jealousy of the British authorities gave rise to fierce disputes as to the right of command. Admiral Watson was singularly tenacious of his rights, and of those of the service to which he belonged. Clive was not slow in upholding his own claims as commander-in-chief of the Company's forces in Bengal, and as holding moreover the rank of lieutenant-colonel in his Majesty's service; an honour which had been conferred upon him before he left England. At the same time, the Governor and Council of Bengal, though they had found their authority a burden in time of danger, were quite

ready to resume it when the danger was passed. A party of sepoys having entered the fort at the same time with a detachment from the ships were unceremoniously turned out by the latter, and Clive on his arrival was informed that none of the Company's officers or troops should have admission. His was not a spirit to submit tamely to such an interdict, and he accordingly entered in defiance of it. He found the fort in possession of Captain Coote, a king's officer, who shewed him a commission from Admiral Watson, appointing him governor. Clive denied the authority of the admiral, and threatened to put Captain Coote under arrest if he refused to acknowledge his own. Captain Coote thereupon desired that Admiral Watson should be made acquainted with the state of affairs on shore, to which Clive assenting, a message was dispatched to the admiral, who, in reply, informed Clive that, if he did not immediately evacuate the fort, it should be fired on. Clive replied that he could not answer for consequences, but that he would not abandon the fort. Further attempts to shake his resolution were made, but Clive persisted in maintaining his claim, with the qualification that if Admiral Watson would come on shore and take the command himself, he would offer no objection. This expedient was adopted. The admiral came, and having received the keys of the garrison from Clive, held them till the next day, when he delivered them in the king's name to the Company's representatives. Thus ended a very idle dispute, by which some time was wasted, the

CHAP. IV. public service impeded, and much ill feeling engendered among brave men engaged in a common cause.

These divisions being healed, the British proceeded to push their success in the direction in which Monichund had fled. A force was detached to attack Hooghly. The fleet prepared the way by battering the fort, and a breach, barely practicable, having been made, it was determined to storm. A false attack at the main gate was made by one division of the troops, while Captain Coote with the other and some sailors succeeded in entering the breach undiscovered. The garrison no sooner perceived the English on the ramparts than they quitted their posts and made their escape at a small gate.

Thus far success the most ample had attended the progress of the British arms; yet even the bold and sanguine spirit of Clive began to doubt of the expediency of persevering in hostility. The Soubahdar was advancing, and the terror of his approach deterred the country people from bringing provisions either to the town or to the army, which was encamped at a short distance from it. Another cause of alarm was the arrival of intelligence that war had been declared between England and France. The truce between the two nations in India was consequently at an end; and as the French had a garrison at Chandernagore containing nearly as many Europeans as the English had in the field, the possibility of their junction with the Soubahdar could not be regarded without the utmost apprehension.

Sooraj-oo-Dowlah professed to be willing to treat,* but did not slacken his march. On the 3rd February, the van of his army was seen advancing in full march towards Calcutta, while some villages in the distance were in flames. Either from a belief that an attack would be hazardous or from a fear of interrupting a settlement by negotiation, little resistance was offered by Clive, and on the next morning the main body of the enemy advanced. A letter was at the same time received from the Soubahdar desiring that deputies from the English camp might be sent to him. Two civil servants, Messrs. Walsh and Scrafton, were appointed to this duty. On being introduced to the chief minister he affected a suspicion that they intended to assassinate the Soubahdar, and desired to examine whether they had not pistols concealed about them. This ceremony performed, he called upon them to part with their swords, but with that demand they refused to comply, and it was not enforced. When brought into the presence of the prince, they delivered their proposals, which he read, and then having whispered to some of his officers, he desired the deputies to confer with his dewan. The conference, however, did not take place. Omichund, after the capture of Calcutta by the Soubahdar, had been his constant follower, in the hope of getting back some part of the property which he had lost. Being

* According to Orme, it was Clive who proposed negotiation.—Hist. vol. ii. page 129. Clive himself represents the overture as coming from the Soubahdar.—First Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1772, page 147.

CHAP. IV. the owner of many houses in Calcutta, and having other interests there, he was anxious at the same time to maintain his influence with the English, and on this occasion he probably saved the lives of the two deputies. He had been present at the audience, and as the deputies were returning he took an opportunity of advising them to take care of themselves, adding, with a significant look, that the Soubahdar's cannon was not yet come up. The deputies, not slow in understanding his intimation, nor backward in acting upon it, ordered their attendants to extinguish their lights; and instead of going to the tent of the dewan, proceeded, in darkness, silence, and panting haste, to the British camp. On receiving their report, Clive determined to attack the enemy on the following morning. The attack was made, but without much judgment. The English, however, succeeded in passing entirely through the enemy's camp, though a thick fog prevented their turning their success to the best account. Neither party derived much either of honour or of satisfaction from the affair, but the Soubahdar's confidence was greatly shaken by it, and he retired some distance with his army. Negoti-
A. D. 1757. ation was then renewed; and on the 9th February a treaty was concluded, by which the Soubahdar agreed to restore the Company's factories, but only such of the plundered effects as had been brought to account in the books of his government, which probably formed a very small part of them. The English were to be permitted to fortify Calcutta in whatever manner they might think expedient, and to coin money in

their own mint. All merchandize under their dustucks or passes was to be exempt from tax, fees, or imposition of any kind; they were to have possession of certain villages, and to be generally confirmed in all the privileges which had been granted them by the Mogul emperors from their first arrival in the province. Two days after the signing of the treaty, the newly established chain of friendship received another link by the addition of an article of alliance offensive and defensive.

On the advantages of this treaty different opinions were entertained, and Admiral Watson was strongly opposed to any attempt at a settlement of the disputes between the Company and the Soubahdar, until the latter had obtained some further experience of the effects of the British arms.* Clive, however, thought differently, and, considering the

* Previously to the conclusion of the treaty, Admiral Watson addressed a letter to Clive, which is a characteristic specimen of the composition of a genuine British seaman. He says, "I am now fully convinced that the nabob's letter was only to amuse us in order to cover his retreat, and gain time till he is reinforced, which may be attended with very fatal consequences. For my own part, I was of opinion that attacking his rear when he was marching off, and forcing him to abandon his cannon, was a most necessary piece of service to bring him to an accommodation; for till he is well thrashed, don't, Sir, flatter yourself he will be inclined for peace. Let us, therefore, not be overreached by his politics, but make use of our arms, which will be much more prevalent than any treaties or negotiations. In order to do this, I have sent Captain Speke to talk with you on the subject. I think, too, it might not be amiss were you to consult some of your own officers on the same occasion. You will pardon the liberty I take on this particular, when I assure you I will do the utmost of my endeavours to assist you."

CHAP. IV. difficulties by which he was surrounded and which he had in prospect, perhaps more justly. His force amounted to something more than two thousand; that of the enemy to forty thousand. A considerable body of French troops, now released from all restraint upon the exercise of their arms, were in the neighbourhood, and though they manifested little disposition to hostility, it was impossible to calculate upon their forbearance, whenever a favourable opportunity for attacking the English should occur. They could now be regarded in no other light than as enemies; and situated as Clive and his associates were, one antagonist was quite sufficient for the time. Another consideration, rendering it desirable to terminate the war as speedily as possible, was the expense of carrying it on. The Company were not then the rulers of the larger part of India, and the arbiters of the destinies of the whole. Trade was their pursuit, and they armed only for its protection. The treaty restored the Company to a position as good in every way as that which they had formerly occupied, and in some respects better. No adequate provision, indeed, was made against future aggressions on the part of the Soubahdar, and none could be made, except by maintaining within the British settlement such a force as should be sufficient to repel them. No satisfaction was obtained for the atrocities of the Black Hole; and the absence of any provision for this purpose is the greatest scandal attached to the treaty. For this no sufficient apology can be found, even in the circumstances which

have been mentioned. Peace was desirable, but even peace is bought too dearly when the sacrifice of national honour is the price. On this point Clive cannot be acquitted of blame, although, as the course which he took was little in accordance with either his natural inclinations or his professional bias, it must be believed that he thought it for the best.*

While the negotiations with the Soubahdar were in progress, the relative position of the French and English had occupied some degree of attention. It

* In a letter written at this time by Clive to the Chairman of the East-India Company, he says, "If I had consulted the interest and reputation of a soldier, the conclusion of this peace might easily have been suspended." In the same letter he thus adverts to the great and peculiar difficulties of his situation, independently of those presented by the power and resources of the enemy as compared with his own: "I can further say, I never undertook an expedition attended with half so many disagreeable circumstances as this: the national jealousy subsisting between sea and land service has given me much uneasiness. I have suffered many mortifications; the independent power given me by the gentlemen of the Committee of Madras has created me many enemies; and lastly, that attention which by my public station I owe to the interest of the Company, in preference to that of private individuals, has not passed by unreflected upon. I am a very considerable sufferer myself; and I can affirm with great truth and sincerity that I have left no means untried with the nabob, when the Company's interest was not immediately concerned, to induce him to consider the unhappy people at Calcutta, and he has often promised to do it." Of the value of this and similar promises, Clive however formed a just estimate. "It cannot," says he, "be expected that the princes of this country, whose fidelity is always to be suspected, will remain firm to their promises and engagements from principle only; it is therefore become absolutely necessary to keep up a respectable force in the provinces for the future."

CHAP. IV. was part of Clive's instructions to attack the French settlement of Chandernagore, if during his command in Bengal news should arrive of war having been declared between England and France. That news had been received; and immediately on the conclusion of the articles of alliance with the Soubahdar, Clive had sought permission to act upon his instructions. The request was for a time evaded, and Clive availed himself of the Soubahdar's temporizing conduct to move a part of the English troops in the direction of Chandernagore. The French, however, were in correspondence with Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and the advance of the British force was stopped by a peremptory injunction from that prince. Clive was fearful of irritating him by a resumption of hostilities; and the French, while endeavouring to strengthen their interest by negotiation with the Soubahdar, were unwilling, till those arrangements were completed, to risk an attack from the English. Both parties sought to postpone the commencement of actual warfare, and an extraordinary measure for effecting their common object was seriously discussed. Formerly England and France had waged war in India while the two countries were at peace at home. This it was now suggested to reverse: peace was to be maintained in Bengal between the representatives of the respective nations, though war raged elsewhere. A proposal to maintain neutrality was made,* and an arrangement based upon

* It is not very clear from which party the proposal emanated. Clive, in a letter to the Committee of Fort William, dated the 4th

it would most probably have been concluded had the French authorities at Chandernagore possessed powers to enable them to complete it. But they were dependent upon the government of Pondicherry, and in consequence of that dependence they were unable to enter into any other than a provisional agreement, subject to confirmation or rejection by the controlling authority. Clive was willing to suspend the commencement of hostilities upon the chance of the treaty being confirmed; but Admiral Watson took a different view, and expressed himself strongly against giving effect to any treaty until it had been ratified by the government of Pondicherry. His determination was obviously right, inasmuch as it was well known that a correspondence was going on between the French and Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and it was not unreasonable to presume that the proposed execution of a provisional treaty

of March, 1757, refers to it as having come from the French, and in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, he distinctly states this to have been the fact. Scrafton, in his Reflections on the Government of Hindostan, gives a similar account. On the other hand, Admiral Watson, in a letter to the Soubahdar, says, that he (the Admiral) invited the French to enter into a treaty of neutrality. In a letter to the Committee of Calcutta, however, conveying his views on the proposed treaty, the Admiral uses expressions which appear to countenance the statements of Clive and Scrafton. The most probable solution of the difficulty is by supposing that there were two overtures made at different times, and by different parties; a supposition supported by some expressions in a private letter of Clive to the Chairman of the East-India Company, in which he speaks of the French "having in a manner refused a neutrality," and adds that they subsequently "offered it."

CHAP. IV. was only an expedient to gain time. Some apprehension, too, might be entertained with respect to the movements of M. Bussy, who having been dismissed with his corps by Salabat Jung, whom he had most ably served, had taken up a strong position at Hyderabad, which, amidst vast difficulties, he maintained against his late patron. Salabat Jung had been desirous of obtaining the aid of the English to replace that of M. Bussy, and the government of Madras were preparing to comply with the request, when the state of affairs in Bengal rendered it necessary to dispatch thither all the troops that could be spared. Bussy obtained reinforcements from Masulipatam; and Salabat Jung, finding it impracticable to dislodge him, made proposals of peace and restoration to favour. As a consequence of this measure, the French were confirmed in the possession of certain maritime districts of considerable extent called the Northern Circars, which had been granted to them some years before. At this time M. Bussy was engaged in settling those districts, the northern point of which is not more than two hundred miles from Calcutta. It was reported that he was on his march towards Bengal with a large force to join the French troops at Chandernagore, and though this was not true, it was certainly not improbable. If, therefore, there were danger in immediately commencing hostilities, there was also danger in delaying the commencement; and in considering the expediency of agreeing to a provisional treaty, it could not fail to be remembered that the engagements entered into by

La Bourdonnais on the capture of Madras, had been scandalously set aside by the alleged superior authority of Dupleix.

But though there were strong reasons against concluding the proffered treaty of neutrality, the opposite course was not free from difficulty. To attack the French without the consent of the Soubahdar was dangerous, and of obtaining his consent there seemed little hope. The Soubahdar's hatred of the English naturally led him to attach himself to their enemies, whom he was actually assisting with money, and was preparing to assist with troops. Many powerful interests, too, were arrayed in opposition to the views of the English. Some of the Soubahdar's officers, who had shared largely in the spoils of Calcutta, were apprehensive of being obliged to refund their plunder. Others derived profit from the French trade; and some native bankers of great wealth and influence dreaded an attack upon Chandernagore, because the government of that settlement was indebted to them in a vast amount. All these interests found channels for intrigue; while, on the other hand, the emissaries of the British Government, both European and native, were actively engaged in soliciting the required permission to commence hostilities. Both parties had recourse to an extensive system of corruption. In the meantime the Soubahdar was alarmed by the intelligence of an Affghan invasion of Delhi, which he apprehended might be extended to his dominions; and this feeling led him to express

CHAP. IV. a wish for the co-operation of the English in his defence. While affairs were in this state, advice was received of the arrival of Admiral Pocock in the *Cumberland*, together with part of the troops which had been dispatched from Madras, and also of reinforcements from Bombay. Clive had constantly maintained the necessity either of agreeing to a neutrality or of immediately attacking Chandernagore. The additional strength now obtained seemed to favour the adoption of the latter branch of the alternative, but it was not determined on without considerable hesitation. The members of the Select Committee were Colonel Clive, Mr. Drake, Major Kilpatrick, and Mr. Becher. The two latter were for maintaining neutrality; Clive was for attack; Mr. Drake seemed scarce to have been more master of himself than at the moment of his discreditable flight from Calcutta. "He gave an opinion," says Clive, "that nobody could make any thing of."* Subsequently Major Kilpatrick asked Clive whether he thought the land and sea forces of the British could oppose Chandernagore and the Soubahdar's army at the same time; and, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, he desired to withdraw his former opinion and adopt that of Clive. The conversion of Major Kilpatrick was followed up by voting the unintelligible "opinion of Mr. Drake to be no opinion at all:"† and thus a majority in favour of war was secured. The immediate result was the dismissal of

* First Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1772, page 147.

† Ibid.

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the French deputies, although it is said that the treaty of neutrality was even fairly copied ready for the signature of those by whom its terms had been arranged.* But a new difficulty occurred. Admiral Watson, though opposed to neutrality, was unwilling to attack the French without the permission of the Soubahdar. To obtain it he had addressed to him a series of letters written in a style of bold expostulation, and, latterly, even of menace. In a letter bearing date the 7th of March, he says, "I now acquaint you that the remainder of the troops, which should have been here long ago, and which I hear the Colonel expected, will be at Calcutta in a few days; that in a few days more I shall dispatch a vessel for more ships and more troops; and that I will kindle such a flame in your country as all the waters in the Ganges shall not be able to extinguish. Farewell! remember that he who promises you this never yet broke his word with you or with any man whatsoever." A.D. 1757.

The answer of the Soubahdar presents a perfect contrast to the direct and blunt style of Admiral Watson's communication. After referring to the principal parts of the admiral's letter, he thus proceeds: "If it be true that one Frenchman does not approve and abide by a treaty entered into by another, no confidence is to be placed in them. The reason of my forbidding war in my country is, that I look on the French as my own subjects, because they have in this affair implored my protection; for

* Orme, vol. ii. page 139.

CHAP. IV. which reason I wrote to you to make peace with them, or else I had neither pleaded for them nor protected them. But you are generous and wise men, and well know if an enemy comes to you with a clean heart to implore your mercy, his life should be granted him, that is if you think him pure of heart; but if you mistrust his sincerity, act according to the time and occasion." This communication was the result partly of the Soubahdar's fears, and partly of a timely present administered to his secretary.* The words "act according to time and occasion" were vague enough, but they were construed into a permission to attack the French; and though subsequent letters evinced a contrary disposition on the part of the Soubahdar, they were not allowed to alter the determination of the British authorities.

Chandernagore was accordingly attacked and fell. The honour of the conquest is principally due to the naval force, or rather to a portion of it. The *Cumberland* could not be brought up the river in time, and Admiral Pocock, unwilling to be disappointed of a share in the approaching attack, took to his barge, the oars of which were plied night and day till he reached the place of action, where he hoisted his flag on board the *Tiger*. The *Salisbury* was by an accident thrown out of action, and the entire brunt of the engagement was sustained by the flag-ships of the two admirals, the *Kent* and the *Tiger*. "Few naval engagements," says Sir John Malcolm, "have excited more admiration, and even at the present

* Scrafton's Reflections, page 70.

day, when the river is so much better known, the success with which the largest vessels of this fleet were navigated to Chandernagore, and laid alongside the batteries of that settlement, is a subject of wonder."* CHAP. IV.

The fire of the ships, says Orme, "did as much execution in three hours as the batteries on shore would have done in several days, during which the whole of the nabob's army might have arrived, when the siege must have been raised; otherwise the troops alone were sufficient to accomplish the success."† A body of the Soubahdar's troops was stationed within the bounds of Chandernagore, previously to the attack. They belonged to the garrison of Hooghly, and were under the command of Nuncomar, governor of that place. Nuncomar had been bought by Omichund for the English, and on their approach, the troops of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah were withdrawn from Chandernagore lest, as the commander alleged, the victorious standard of the Soubahdar should be involved in the disgrace about to overtake the French.

It had been expected that Clive would be able to effect the re-establishment of the British interests in Bengal in time to return in April with his troops to Madras, at which place a visit from the French was apprehended; and compliance with this expectation was now enjoined by the government of Fort St. George. But the state of affairs in Bengal did not, in Clive's judgment, warrant so early a departure. A.D. 1757.

* Life of Clive, vol. i. p. 192. † History, vol. ii. p. 145.

CHAP. IV. It can scarcely be questioned that this view was a just one. The Soubahdar's hatred of the English was in no degree abated—it had rather gained strength from the humiliation which his arms had suffered; and the withdrawal of any part of the British force would only have been the prelude to a renewal of hostilities, accompanied probably by a repetition of the atrocities of the Black Hole; while the absence of Clive would throw the task of averting or encountering this impending danger into the hands of the weak and incapable persons who had already involved the name of their country in disgrace, and its interests in ruin. The sole imputation that can fairly be cast upon Clive in determining to remain somewhat longer in Bengal than was intended, is that such conduct was a violation of his instructions, and this reproach is not a light one. In excuse, however, he had to plead the peculiar circumstances of his situation. He had been sent to re-establish the British interests in Bengal, and the work was yet incomplete. Had Clive at this time returned to Madras, he would have left the possessions and commerce of his country in Bengal to the mercy of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah and the French commander Law.

Alarmed by the success of the English at Chandernagore and by a report that the Affghans were in full march to Behar, the Soubahdar thought it necessary to assume an appearance of cordiality towards the victors. He addressed letters of congratulation to Clive and Watson, but at the same

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time made a most suspicious distribution of his military force, and protected the French who had escaped from Chandernagore. These, by the Soubahdar's assistance, reached the French factory at Cossimbazar, where M. Law held the command. Clive demanded leave to attack them, but in place of granting it, the Soubahdar furnished them with money, arms, and ammunition, to enable them to escape, under a promise of being recalled at some future period. He had for some time carried on a correspondence with M. Bussy, urging him to repair to the relief of his countrymen in the Soubahdar's territories.* Towards the English he manifested very

* The following is one of the letters addressed by the Soubahdar to M. Bussy. Sabut Jung, signifying "daring in war," is a name by which Clive is still known in India. "These disturbers of my country, the Admiral and Sabut Jung (Col. Clive), whom bad fortune attend, without any reason whatever, are warring against Zoobat-ool-Toojar (M. Renault), the governor of Chandernagore. This you will learn from his letters. I, who in all things seek the good of mankind, assist him in every respect, and have sent him the best of my troops that he may join with them and fight the English, and if it becomes necessary I will join him myself. I hope in God those English who are unfortunate will be punished for the disturbances they have raised. Be confident, look on my forces as your own. I have wrote you before for two thousand soldiers and musquetteers under the command of one or two trusty chiefs. I persuade myself you have already sent them: should you not, I desire you will do me the pleasure to send them immediately. Further particulars you will learn from M. Renault. Oblige me with frequent news of your health." Another letter is written in the same spirit: "I have with great pleasure received news of your being arrived near the Orissa country with a powerful army of soldiers, telingas, &c., to the assistance of the commander of Chandernagore. I promise myself great pleasure in seeing you; a meeting will confirm the great friendship between us. I have

CHAP. IV. different feelings. The passage of a few British sepoys to Cossimbazar was obstructed by the Soubahdar's officers, and the transit of ammunition and stores to the English factory there, forbidden. The execution of the pecuniary provisions of the treaty was reluctant, tardy, and imperfect, and after a time the Soubahdar's dewan endeavoured to obtain an acquittance for the whole of the stipulated sum, though a part only had been paid.

Such was the conduct of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah towards the English. In the meantime a spirit was at work among his own subjects and servants, which exposed his throne to danger more imminent than any arising from causes with which he was acquainted.

ordered the naibs of the soubah, the phousdars and jemadars of Midnapore to wait on you and assist you in your march." In one written after the capture of Chandernagore, he says, "I am advised that you are arrived at Echapore. This news gives me pleasure: the sooner you come here the greater satisfaction I shall have in meeting you. What can I write of the perfidy of the English? They have without ground picked a quarrel with M. Renault, and taken by force his factory. They want now to quarrel with M. Law, your chief at Cossimbazar, but I will take care to oppose and overthrow their proceedings. When you come to Balasore, I will then send M. Law to your assistance, unless you forbid his setting out. Rest assured of my good-will towards you and your Company; and to convince you of my sincerity, I now send purwannahs (orders) to Deedar Ali and Ramagee Pundit, and to Rajaram Singh, that as soon as you may enter the province they may meet and lend you all possible assistance, and not on any pretence impede your march both at Cuttack, Balasore, and Midnapore."

By the use of some of that mysterious agency which abounds in Oriental courts, Mr. Watts, the British resident, became acquainted with the contents of these letters when they were written. In the subsequent progress of events copies of them were found at Moorshedabad.

In the entire circle of his officers, Sooraj-oo-Dowlah had not a single adherent on whom he could rely. Many were disgusted by his caprice, and almost all feared that its consequences might some time be fatal to themselves. The feeling of discontent and the desire of change were not confined to the range of the court or the camp: they had extended even to a class of persons of all mankind the most cautious, and peculiarly liable to loss from political disturbances. Among those who wished to see the throne of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah occupied by another, were the Seits, native bankers, of great influence and great wealth. These portents had not been unobserved by Law, the French commander. He had warned the Soubahdar of the disaffection of many of his servants, had pointed out the consequences which would follow, and on taking leave of the prince previously to his departure from Cossimbazar, had emphatically declared his conviction that they should never meet again. Clive, too, had watched the indications of the gathering storm, and saw in its approach the dawn of British supremacy. When it was determined to attack Chandernagore, he had said that the English, having established themselves in Bengal, not by consent but by force, the Soubahdar would endeavour by force to drive them out—that consequently they could not stop where they were, but must go further. The soundness of these views was confirmed by the subsequent conduct of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah. It was obvious that he was resolved to get rid of the English, and that he

CHAP. IV. was ready to use the arms of their European enemy to accomplish his purpose: the state of feeling among the Soubahdar's subjects consequently acquired an increasing interest, and the British agents were instructed to observe it with great care.

A.D. 1757. On the 23rd April, an officer named Yar Loottief Khan requested a secret conference with Mr. Watts, the British resident at the Soubahdar's court. This applicant commanded two thousand horse in the service of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah. He was, at the same time, in the pay of the Seits, native bankers, already mentioned, whom he was engaged to defend against any danger, even though his arms should be required against the Soubahdar himself.* The interview solicited with Mr. Watts it was thought dangerous to grant, but Omichund was sent to ascertain the object of the application. To him Loottief opened his views, representing that the Soubahdar would soon march to the northward to oppose the Affghans—that he intended to temporize with the English until his return, when he had determined to extirpate them, and never again to permit them to establish a settle-

* It seems at this time not to have been unusual for the wealthy inhabitants of India to defend themselves by arms against the government. When Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was about to attack Calcutta, one of his spies addressed a letter to Omichund, advising him to remove his effects from the scene of danger. The letter was intercepted, and a guard was sent to prevent the removal of the property. The brother-in-law of Omichund, and chief manager of his affairs, concealed himself in the apartments of the women, and an attempt made to take him was resisted by a body of peons and armed domestics in Omichund's service amounting to three hundred.

ment in his dominions—that most of his officers held him in utter detestation, and were ready to join the first leader of distinction who should raise the standard of revolt. Upon these alleged facts was formed a proposal that the English, during the absence of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, should seize Moorshedabad, and proclaim Loottief soubahdar, in which enterprise he promised them the assistance of some of the most powerful interests in the country, including that of the Seits. Part of Loottief's statement was known to be true, and the rest seemed not improbable. Neither the disposition of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah towards the English, nor that of his officers towards himself, could be doubted: it might readily therefore be believed that the Soubahdar entertained the intention ascribed to him, and that his chief officers would co-operate in a plan for his overthrow. Watts communicated the overture to Clive, who thereupon suspended the movement of a detachment which was about to be dispatched in pursuit of M. Law and his men, the march of which would probably have precipitated the commencement of open hostilities with the Soubahdar.

On the day following the conference with Loottief, the proposal made by that person was again made to Mr. Watts, with this difference, that instead of Loottief being raised to the soubahdarship that honour was claimed for Meer Jaffier, a distinguished commander in the service of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and related to him by marriage. The rank and power of Meer Jaffier rendered this proposal more advan-

CHAP. IV. tageous than that of Loottief, if indeed the latter had been seriously intended; but the probability seems to be, that it was only designed to sound the disposition of the English before implicating Meer Jaffier in the intrigue.* This revised plan was immediately made known to Clive, and by him to the select committee, who, thinking that a revolution in the government, into whatever hands it might fall, would be advantageous to the English,† unanimously determined to entertain the proposal. The Soubahdar had been relieved from apprehension of an invasion from the northward by the arrival of intelligence of the retreat of the Affghans from Delhi. His only remaining anxiety was occasioned by the English, and to keep them in check he resolved to reinforce a large division of his army which lay encamped at Plassy, about thirty miles from Moorshedabad and ninety from Calcutta. The destined reinforcement consisted of not less than fifteen thousand men, and the general selected for the command was Meer Jaffier, the man who was plotting for the destruction of his sovereign, and his own elevation to the throne. His appointment separated the chief conspirator from the British resident, Mr. Watts, who was conducting the negotiation on behalf of his government, but Meer Jaffier was afraid to decline the command lest suspicion should be excited. He

* This is the view taken by Stewart, History of Bengal, page 521. It seems also to be confirmed by Orme.—History, vol. ii. page 148.

† Letter from Select Committee to Secret Committee of East India Company, 14th June, 1757.

accordingly proceeded to obey his master's orders with apparent alacrity, leaving an agent to conduct the correspondence with the British resident.

While the negotiations were in progress, a letter was received in Calcutta from the Peishwa, offering to invade Bengal with one hundred and twenty thousand men, within six weeks after receiving an invitation from the English government. It was brought by a stranger, who seems to have been unable to authenticate his mission, and suspicion arose that the letter was an artifice of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah to try the sincerity of the English. It was consequently determined to send the letter to the Soubahdar; a step which, whether the document were genuine or not, would have the appearance of amicable feeling. Further to lull the Soubahdar into security till the moment arrived for striking the meditated blow, Clive broke up the English camp, removing half the troops into Calcutta and the remainder into Chandernagore; and he availed himself of this movement to call upon Sooraj-oo-Dowlah to give similar evidence of pacific dispositions by withdrawing his army from Plassy. This point was pressed by Mr. Scrafton, who was dispatched to the Soubahdar's court with the Peishwa's letter.* With the transmission of that document, which proved to be genuine, the Soubahdar appeared greatly pleased, but he still hesitated to withdraw his army, and expressed some

* Another, and the principal object of Mr. Scrafton's mission, was to obtain an opportunity of consulting confidentially with Meer Jaffier; but this was prevented by the watchfulness of the Soubahdar's emissaries.

CHAP. IV. doubts of Clive's sincerity. These doubts Mr. Scrafton exerted himself to remove, and not without effect. Orders were issued for recalling the army to Moorshedabad. Meer Jaffier consequently returned to the capital, and there gave an audience to Mr. Watts, under circumstances of great mystery and danger. A treaty was then produced, which Meer Jaffier swore on the Koran to observe, and added, in his own handwriting, the words:—"I swear by God and the Prophet of God, to abide by the terms of this treaty while I have life." The treaty confirmed all the articles agreed upon in the treaty of peace with Sooraj-oo-Dowlah; declared the enemies of the English, whether Indian or European, the enemies of the future soubahdar; transferred to the English all the factories and effects of the French in Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, and proscribed the latter nation from again settling in those countries. A crore of rupees* was to be given as compensation to the English Company for the plunder of Calcutta and the maintenance of their forces, fifty lacs to the English inhabitants of that place, twenty lacs to the Hindoo and Mahometan inhabitants, and seven lacs to the Armenian inhabitants, the distribution of all which sums was to be made by the British authorities. Certain tracts of lands were given to the British, and the aspirant to the soubahdarship bound himself to pay the charges of the English troops whenever he might require their assistance, to abstain from erecting any new fortifications near the Ganges below

* A hundred lacs—about a million sterling.

Hooghly, and to make the stipulated payments as soon as he should be settled in the three provinces. A treaty embodying the same stipulations was signed by the British authorities, and which contained an additional article, solemnly binding them to assist Meer Jaffier in obtaining the government, and to maintain him in it when called upon, on condition of his observing the articles of the treaty. By a separate arrangement, fifty lacs were to be given to the army and navy.

In Moorshedabad the state of affairs was rapidly tending to a crisis. Before Meer Jaffier was selected for the command of the troops designed to reinforce the army of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah at Plassy, he had been on bad terms with that prince. The Soubahdar's ill feeling revived with the recall of the army, and Meer Jaffier was deprived of his command. This step was not the result of any knowledge or suspicion of the plot in which Meer Jaffier was engaged; it was merely one of those capricious acts of offence in which Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was accustomed to indulge. Subsequently some confused reports reached his ears of the existence of a conspiracy, of which Meer Jaffier was the head, and in which other of the Soubahdar's principal officers were concerned. For several days fierce messages were interchanged between the prince and the general. On the 11th June, letters received in the city from Calcutta announced that the English were confederated with Meer Jaffier, but the Soubahdar appeared to disbelieve it. Two days afterwards, the A.D. 1757.

CHAP. IV. sudden departure of Mr. Watts, the British resident, convinced him that the announcement was true. He was then preparing to attack the palace of Meer Jaffier with artillery, but panic-struck by the discovery of the extent of the confederacy organized against him, he abandoned hostilities, and invited his rebellious general to a conference. Influenced either by fear or contempt, Meer Jaffier refused to attend the summons of his sovereign; on learning which, the terror of the Soubahdar overcame his pride, and waving at once his right to command the presence of his subjects, and the state in which he was accustomed to receive them, he sought at the palace of Meer Jaffier the interview which was denied him at his own, and proceeded thither with a retinue too small to excite apprehension. The result of the meeting to the Soubahdar was perfectly satisfactory; professions of reconciliation, and promises of fidelity, were exchanged with an appearance of sincerity, which seemed to want nothing but the solemn sanction of religion to render it impossible to disbelieve them. This too was supplied—both parties swore on the Koran to adhere to their engagements;* and the Soubahdar, relieved from a degree of alarm which had been felt as almost overwhelming, was now excited to the highest degree of confidence and exaltation. He forthwith addressed a letter to Clive, couched in terms of indignation and defiance, and in proud anticipation of a victory

* "The Koran was introduced, the accustomed pledge of their falsehood."—Scrafton's Reflections, page 85.

over his English enemy, ordered his whole army to assemble without delay at their former encampments at Plassy. A portion of the force, upon which his hopes were rested, consisted of the troops of Meer Jaffier, commanded by that officer in person. Such was the reliance placed by Sooraj-oo-Dowlah upon the effect of his recent conference with one whom he so lately suspected of treachery. CHAP. IV.

In the meantime the English had not been idle. The treaties signed by Meer Jaffier were received in Calcutta on the 10th June. No time was to be lost in commencing operations, for before this period the secret of his intended movement against Sooraj-oo-Dowlah had by some means transpired, and had become a subject of common talk. It was thus that it became known at Moorshedabad on the 11th. On the 12th, the troops at Calcutta, with a party of one hundred and fifty seamen from the fleet, marched to join the remainder of the British force at Chandernagore. Here one hundred seamen were left in garrison, in order that every soldier might be at liberty for service in the field, and on the 13th the rest of the force proceeded on their march. It consisted of six hundred and fifty European infantry, one hundred and fifty artillerymen including fifty seamen, two thousand one hundred sepoys, and a small number of Portuguese, making a total of something more than three thousand men. It was accompanied by eight field-pieces and one or two howitzers. On the day of its leaving Chandernagore, Clive dispatched a letter to the Soubahdar, reproaching A.D. 1757.

CHAP. IV. him with his evasions of the treaty, and other instances of perfidy; his correspondence with Bussy; his protection of Law and his troops; and his insolence towards various servants of the British Government. In contrast, Clive dwelt upon the patience shewn by the English, and their readiness to assist him against the apprehended invasion of the Affghans. It was added, that the English had determined to proceed to the island of Cossimbazar, and refer their disputes to the arbitration of Meer Jaffier, Roydooloob, the Soubahdar's dewan (who was also engaged in the conspiracy), the bankers Seits, and other eminent persons: and if it were found that they had deviated from the treaty, they would give up all further claims; but if it appeared that it had been broken by Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, satisfaction would be demanded for the losses sustained by the English, and for all the charges of their army and navy. Clive concluded by announcing, that as the rainy season was near at hand, and many days must elapse before an answer could reach him, he had found it necessary to wait upon the Soubahdar immediately.

The British force continued its march without A.D. 1757. interruption, and on the 17th of June took possession of the town and fort of Kutwah, where they found an immense store of rice. Clive, however, was kept in great anxiety by the dubious conduct of Meer Jaffier, whose communications were few, and generally of such ambiguous import, that it was not unnatural to infer either that his reconciliation with

the Soubahdar was sincere, or that he wanted resolution to aid the accomplishment of his own design. Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, after some altercation with his troops respecting arrears of pay, had succeeded in assembling at and near Plassy his whole force, amounting to fifty thousand men, of whom fifteen thousand were cavalry, with upwards of forty pieces of cannon.* The Hooghly flowed between the two armies, and to cross it was to provoke an engagement. Uncertain of the support of Meer Jaffier, and doubtful of the success of an attack unaided by his co-operation, Clive hesitated to take a step which, if it should fail, would be fatal to the British power in Bengal. Had a defeat ensued, said Clive, "not one man would have returned to tell it."† In this state of mind, he had recourse to an expedient little in accordance with the bold and independent character of his mind. He called a council of war, at which he proposed the question, whether, in the existing situation of the British force, it would, without assistance, be prudent to attack the Soubahdar.‡ Orme remarks, that "it is very rare that a council of war decides for battle; for as

* Orme says the Soubahdar's army consisted of fifty thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse: Scrafton says, fifty thousand foot and twenty thousand horse. The numbers in the text are taken from the official account addressed by Clive to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors.

† First Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1772, page 149.

‡ The question actually proposed has been variously stated. Clive himself represents it to have been "whether they should

CHAP. IV. the commander never consults his officers in this authentic form, but when great difficulties are to be surmounted, the general communication increases the sense of risk and danger which every one brings with him to the consultation." In this particular case the natural leaning to the side of caution was perhaps strengthened by the unusual order in which the opinions of the members of council were taken. Instead of beginning with that of the youngest

cross the river and attack Sooraj-oo-Dowlah with their own force alone, or wait for further intelligence."—First Report, page 149.

Sir Eyre Coote states that Clive, after adverting to the relative circumstances of the belligerents, put the question, "whether in those circumstances it would be prudent to come to an immediate action with the Nabob, or fortify themselves (the English) where they were, and remain till the monsoon was over, and the Mahrattas could be brought into the country to join us."—First Report, page 153.

The following is Orme's version:—"Whether the army should immediately cross into the island of Cossimbazar, and at all risks attack the Nabob; or whether, availing themselves of the great quantity of rice which they had taken at Kutwah, they should maintain themselves there during the rainy season, and in the meantime invite the Mahrattas to enter the province to join them."—History, vol. ii. page 170. This corresponds substantially with Sir Eyre Coote's statement.

Sir John Malcolm, on the authority of a manuscript report of the proceedings found among Clive's papers, gives the question thus:—"Whether in our present situation, without assistance, and on our own bottom, it would be prudent to attack the Nabob, or whether we should wait till joined by some country power." This differs from the accounts given by Coote and Orme, principally in the substitution of a general reference to the aid of some native power in place of the particular reference to the Mahrattas; but it differs materially from Clive's own statement to the Select Committee of the House of Commons. The real question, however, in whatever manner framed, was as stated in the text.

officer, and proceeding according to the gradation of rank to him who held the chief command, Clive first declared his own opinion, which was against hazarding an action. The influence of his rank, and the deference paid to his military talents, must be presumed to have had some effect upon the judgment of those who were to follow, more especially when the opinion of one of the most daring of men was given against the course to which his natural temperament would incline him. The result was, that of twenty officers who attended the council, thirteen were favourable to delay.* Among those whose voices were given for immediate action was Major Coote, afterwards distinguished in Indian warfare as Sir Eyre Coote. CHAP. IV.

But the decision of the council was overruled by the man whose influence had in all probability mainly contributed to produce it. Sixteen years afterwards Clive observed, that this was the only council of war that he had ever held, and that if he had abided by that council, it would have been the ruin of the East-India Company. On the 22nd of June, the British force crossed the river.† An hour A.D. 1757.

* Orme, Sir Eyre Coote, and Sir John Malcolm, all agree in affirming that thirteen then voted for delay, and seven for immediate attack.

† The circumstances attending Clive's change of purpose, and the consequent passage of the river, are very differently stated. Orme says that Clive's determination to advance was the result of an hour's solitary meditation after the breaking up of the council; that on his return to his quarters he gave orders that the army should cross the river the next morning; that at sunrise they

CHAP. IV. after midnight they arrived at Plassy, and took up their position there in a grove of mango trees.

At daybreak the army of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was discovered in motion. Countless bodies of troops

began to pass, and were all landed on the opposite shore by four in the afternoon. (See History, vol. ii. page 171.)

Stewart (History of Bengal) gives a similar account, but it appears to be copied from Orme's. Sir John Malcolm, in his Life of Clive, repeats Orme's statement, omitting however any reference to the retirement, which Orme alleges to have caused the change. Sir Eyre Coote (First Report, page 153) states, that about an hour after the council broke up, Clive informed him that, notwithstanding the resolution of the council of war, he intended to march the next morning, and accordingly gave orders for the army to hold themselves in readiness. This is perfectly consistent with Orme's account. On the other hand, Scrafton, who was on the spot and was greatly in the confidence of Clive, ascribes the change in the views of the British commander to a letter received from Meer Jaffier on the day after the council of war was held. (Reflections, page 85.) And what is still more remarkable, Clive himself, in his evidence before the Select Committee (First Report, page 149), says that "after about twenty-four hours' mature consideration he took upon himself to break through the opinion of the council, and ordered the army to cross the river." After hearing the evidence of Sir Eyre Coote, he still appears to have adhered to this belief, "because the troops did not cross the river to make the attack till the 22nd of June, in the evening," although he admits that he might have held the conversation related by Sir Eyre Coote on the previous day. Scrafton says the passage of the river was made at "five in the evening." This is in accordance with Clive's official account. In his letter to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, giving a report of the battle of Plassy and the circumstances which led to it, he says, "the 22nd, in the evening, we crossed the river."

With regard to the time when Clive's change of views was formed and communicated, it is quite impossible to reconcile the conflicting accounts. It has been said that it was owing to some

were seen advancing with guns of the largest calibre, drawn by vast trains of oxen, while a number of elephants, gorgeously clothed in scarlet cloth and embroidery, added greatly to the magnificence of the spectacle, if they contributed little to the strength of the army which they adorned. The cavalry and infantry were disposed in columns of four or five thousand each, and between them were placed portions of the artillery. They marched as if intending to surround the English force as far as the river would permit; but, as soon as their rear was clear of the camp they halted, and a party of forty or fifty Frenchmen* advanced with some guns, their officer, named Sinfray, calling upon some of the

representation of Major Coote, but this was distinctly denied by that officer. As to the passage of the river, it must undoubtedly have occupied some time; but if commenced at sunrise and concluded at four o'clock, it would scarcely be correct to speak of it, as Clive has done, as made "in the evening." There is, however, another difficulty. Orme says the march, after crossing the river, occupied eight hours, and that the army reached Plassy at one o'clock in the morning. Scrafton says the march was performed between five in the evening and one in the morning; and Clive, in his official report to the Secret Committee, gives the latter hour as the time of arrival at Plassy. The circumstances of the march, respecting which there is no disagreement, seem irreconcilable with the belief that Clive's determination was not formed till late in the day on which it was performed, as no time would be allowed for passing the river. It is remarkable that Sir John Malcolm, after adopting Orme's statement of the circumstances of passing the river (Life of Clive, vol. i. page 261), should quote, without explanation or comment, Clive's official account (page 264), which is not consistent with it.

* Orme calls them "vagabond Frenchmen." They possibly deserved the epithet, but he gives no reason for bestowing it.

CHAP. IV. Soubahdar's troops to follow him. But his invitation was disregarded; "for such," says Scrafton, "was their mistrust of each other, that no commander dared to venture on singly, for fear some other commander, suspected of attachment to us, should fall on him." A general cannonading, however, commenced from the Soubahdar's artillery. This was felt severely by the English, who had quitted the grove where they were sheltered by a bank, in front of which they were now drawn up. Clive accordingly returned with his troops, and they once more took up their position behind the bank. The enemy thereupon advanced their heavy artillery nearer, and fired with greater rapidity than before; but they produced little effect, the English troops escaping the shots by sitting down under cover of the bank. About noon, a heavy shower so much damaged the enemy's powder that their fire became feeble; but the English, who had throughout the day answered the enemy's guns with their field-pieces, continued firing without interruption and with considerable effect. Another disaster befel the Soubahdar's cause in the loss of Moodeem Khan, one of the most able and faithful of his generals, who fell mortally wounded by a cannon ball. Shortly afterwards the enemy ceased firing, the oxen were yoked to the artillery, and the whole army turned and proceeded slowly towards their camp. The Frenchmen, who seem to have behaved with much gallantry, still kept their post, till a party of the British force under Major Kilpatrick moved forward

to attack them;* when Sinfray, seeing himself unsupported, retired, but carried off his guns. The detachment which had dislodged the French party was soon joined by the remainder of the British force, and all the field-pieces having been brought up, a vigorous cannonade was commenced on the enemy's camp. Symptoms of confusion after a time encouraged Clive to attack at once an angle of the camp, and an eminence near it. Both were carried. A general rout ensued, and the camp, baggage, and artillery of the enemy became prize to their conquerors. The enemy were pursued for about six miles, and it is supposed lost in the action and during the pursuit five or six hundred men. The loss of the English in killed and wounded was about seventy.

Clive had intended to maintain the cannonade during the day, and to attack the camp at midnight. The retreat of the enemy, followed as it was by the

* Clive's conduct in consequence of this movement appears to reflect little credit upon him. It was made by Major Kilpatrick without Clive's orders, and as soon as the latter became aware of it, he dismissed the Major to another duty with a sharp reprimand, and proceeded himself with the party to the French post. Major Kilpatrick was not justified in acting without orders, and Clive need not be blamed for vindicating his own authority; but his official report of the transaction is uncandid, inasmuch as it seems to claim to himself the merit of a successful movement which was commenced without his knowledge. His words are: "we immediately sent a detachment, accompanied with two field-pieces, to take possession of a tank with high banks, which was advanced about three hundred yards above our grove, and from whence the enemy had considerably annoyed us with some cannon managed by Frenchmen." The idle story of Clive having been asleep when the movement was commenced merits no notice.

CHAP. IV. happy movement of Major Kilpatrick, placed victory in his hands at an earlier period. "Sooraj-oo-Dowlah," Clive observed, "had no confidence in his army, nor his army any confidence in him, and therefore they did not do their duty on the occasion."* He might have added, that one half of those who held commands in his army had no intention or desire to do their duty. When Moodeen Khan was killed, the unhappy sovereign sent for Meer Jaffier. Casting his turban at the feet of his servant, he implored him in piteous and almost abject terms to forget the differences which had existed between them, and conjured him, by the respect due to their departed relative Aliverdi Khan, to defend the throne of his successor. Meer Jaffier promised all that the Soubahdar could wish, and, as the best advice that a devoted friend could offer, suggested, in consideration of the advance of the day and the fatigue of the troops, that the conflict should be suspended till the following morning. The Soubahdar objected that the English might attack him in the night, but Meer Jaffier assured him that he would guard against this contingency. Orders were accordingly dispatched to the dewan, Mohun Lal, to recall the troops to the camp. The dewan remonstrated; but Meer Jaffier insisted, and his counsel prevailed.† The work thus commenced by one of the conspirators was completed by another. On the approach of the English, Roydooloob advised the Soubahdar to

* First Report, page 155.

† Scott's History of Bengal, from Gholaun Hussein Khan, p. 368.

retire to Moorshedabad,* and the recommendation was too well supported by the fears of him to whom it was addressed to be disregarded. Sooraj-oo-Dowlah fled with the utmost rapidity, and was one of the first to bear to his capital the news of his own disgrace. The disappearance of the Soubahdar rendered hopeless any attempt to rally his troops, and nothing was left for the English to perform but to take possession of the camp and pursue the fugitives.

During the greater part of the day, Clive had remained uncertain of the intentions of Meer Jaffier: it is probable, indeed, that Meer Jaffier himself shared the uncertainty, and that all that he had determined was to shape his course according to circumstances—to watch the turn of events, and join the party for whom victory declared. Late in the day, a large body of troops was observed on the flank of the English, whose object it was not easy to ascertain. This was the division of Meer Jaffier; but, in consequence of the miscarriage of a message dispatched by him to the English commander, no signs of recognition had been agreed upon. These troops were consequently regarded with suspicion, and the English kept them at a distance with their field-pieces. When, however, the general retreat took place, they kept apart from the rest of the Soubahdar's army. Clive then became satisfied, not only that they were the troops of Meer Jaffier, but that they would not be employed in support of the Soubahdar, and he was thereby encouraged to the

* Orme's History, vol. ii. page 175.

CHAP. IV. attack upon the enemy's camp, which secured the victory. Meer Jaffier had not intended that he should remain thus long in suspense. Immediately after his interview with the Soubahdar, when the pathetic appeal of the prince had drawn from the general renewed expressions of duty and attachment, Meer Jaffier had addressed a letter to Clive acquainting him with the advice which he had just given his master. That advice, it will be recollected, was to discontinue the battle for the day, but to renew it on the following; and to secure its adoption Meer Jaffier had undertaken to guard against the chance of a surprise in the night. To Clive, this single-minded man recommended immediately to push forward, or at all events not to delay an attack beyond three o'clock on the following morning. But the messenger to whom the letter was entrusted was afraid of the firing; it was consequently not delivered till the course of the British commander had been in a great measure determined, and it only served to give further assurance of its expediency.

Meer Jaffier was not unconscious that his conduct throughout had been open to suspicion. He had endeavoured to stand well with both parties, so that, whatever the event of the contest, he might be safe; but he felt some doubts whether his treason in the council would be regarded by the English as compensating for his neutrality in the field. In the interview with the English officers which followed the flight of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, he evinced more apprehension than joy; the military honours with which

he was received at the English camp, alarmed instead of gratifying him, and he started back "as if," says Scrafton, "it was all over with him." On being introduced to Clive, his fears were allayed by the apparent cordiality with which the colonel saluted him as Soubahdar of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. A few days afterwards he was led by Clive to the musnud, in the hall of audience, at Moorshedabad, and received the formal homage of the principal officers and dependents of the government.

Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was now a wanderer through the country which lately owned no law but his will. On arriving at his palace, after his flight from Plassy, he found himself in danger of being abandoned by every adherent. To secure the continued fidelity of his soldiers, he made a large distribution of money among them. They readily accepted his bounty, but deserted with it to their own homes. His nearest relatives refused to engage in his support, or even to encounter the danger of accompanying him in the further flight, which was now inevitable. That flight was accelerated by the arrival of Meer Jaffier; and taking advantage of the night, Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, with a very slender retinue, departed, in the hope of being able to join the French detachment under M. Law. In search of shelter and food, he entered the dwelling of a devotee, who in the day of his power had been one of the sufferers from his cruelty.* The person of the applicant was known,

* Orme states that he had caused his ears to be cut off; Clive says, his nose and ears. Clive and Scott call the sufferer a fakeer; Stewart calls him, a dervise.

CHAP. IV. and the injury was remembered, but the hospitality implored was not withheld. The host received his visitors with courtesy, and placed before them refreshment; availing himself of the time occupied in partaking of it to dispatch private information of the arrival of his distinguished guest to Meer Cossim, a relative of Meer Jaffier, who held a command in the neighbourhood. The intelligence was too welcome to be neglected, and Meer Cossim, proceeding to the cell of the hermit, made prisoners of his visitors and took possession of their effects. The deposed prince was forthwith taken back to Moorshedabad, and, it is said, was treated on the way with great indignity and cruelty. Meer Jaffier felt or affected some compassion for the prisoner. Meerun, his son, a youth whose character strongly resembled that of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, cherished no such weakness. By Meerun the unhappy captive was devoted to death; but, either from the prevalence of respect for the rank of the destined victim, or from a belief that Meer Jaffier would not sanction the deed, some difficulty was experienced in finding an executioner. At length the task was undertaken by a miscreant who had from infancy enjoyed the bounty, first of Aliverdi Khan, and subsequently of his grandson and successor, now a prisoner and destined for death. The favours which had been heaped on him formed no impediment to his undertaking the murder of the man to whom and to whose family the assassin was so deeply indebted. Many there were from whom

Sooraj-oo-Dowlah could look for nothing but vengeance—his death came from one of the few on whom he had a claim for gratitude. He had not completed the twentieth year of a profligate and scandalous life, nor the fifteenth month of a weak and cruel reign.

Little now remained but the performance of the pecuniary stipulations agreed upon between the British Government and Meer Jaffier. The wealth of the Soubahdar's treasury had been greatly overrated, but it was yet able to bear very heavy drafts. After some discussion, it was decided that one-half of the stipulated amount should be paid immediately, and the remainder at intervals within three years. The first payment seems to have been the cause of great delight. The money was packed in seven hundred chests, which being placed in one hundred boats, the whole proceeded down the river in procession, with banners waving above, and music pealing around them. Many indeed had reason to rejoice in the advance of the richly freighted fleet. Those who had sustained losses at the capture of Calcutta were to have compensation, and the army and navy had been encouraged to look for reward. There was also another class of persons who were expecting to participate in the wealth which thus followed in the train of victory. When the negotiation with Meer Jaffier was in progress, Mr. Becher, a member of the select committee, suggested that, as the army and navy were to have donations, the committee, by whom the whole machinery had been put in mo-

CHAP. IV. tion, were entitled "to be considered,"—and they were considered. Clive received on this account two lacs and eighty thousand rupees; Mr. Drake, the governor, the same sum; and the remaining members of the committee two lacs and forty thousand rupees each. The generosity of the new Soubahdar even extended to those members of council who were not of the select committee, and who consequently had no claim "to be considered" under the original proposal. Each of these gentlemen, it is stated, received a lac of rupees.* Clive, according to his own statement, received a further present of sixteen lacs of rupees. Mr. Watts, in addition to his share as one of the committee, obtained eight lacs; Major Kilpatrick, three lacs, besides his share; Mr. Walsh, who was employed in part of the negotiations, had five lacs; Mr. Scrafton, two. Others participated to a smaller extent in the profuse distribution that took place. Such transactions are perfectly in accordance with the spirit and practice of Oriental governments; but they are not reconcilable with European ideas. Many years afterwards, when the conduct of Clive was, on this account, impugned, he defended himself with some talent and some plausibility. He maintained his right to avail himself of the munificence of Meer Jaffier, on the grounds that he committed no injustice, and caused no injury to his employers — that his forbearance would not have benefited them—that he had aban-

* Becher's Evidence before Select Committee of House of Commons, First Report, page 145. A lac of rupees is about £10,000.

doned all commercial advantages to devote himself to a military life—and that all his actions had been governed by a regard to the honour of his country and the interests of the East-India Company. He even claimed credit for his moderation. "The city of Moorshedabad," said he, "is as extensive, populous, and rich, as the city of London,* with this difference, that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last city. These, as well as every other man of property, made me the greatest offers (which nevertheless are usual on such occasions, and what they expected would be required), and had I accepted these offers, I might have been in possession of millions, which the present Court of Directors† could not have dispossessed me of;"‡ and he declared that, when he recollected entering the treasury at Moorshedabad, "with heaps of gold and silver to the right and left, and these crowned with jewels," he stood astonished at his own moderation.§

That Clive never sacrificed the interests either of his country or of the East-India Company to his own is certain; the temptations to which he and his coadjutors were exposed, and the fact that the receiving of presents was then forbidden neither by law nor by the covenants of the Company's servants,

* This was spoken in 1772, and was probably then confined to the city of London properly so called.

† With whom he was then at variance.

‡ First Report, page 150.

§ Malcolm's Life of Clive, vol. i. page 313.

CHAP. IV. must also be allowed their due weight. Neither must it be forgotten, that the fixed emoluments of the Company's servants were at that time altogether inadequate to remunerate the duties which were required. In some instances, they were not sufficient to provide the means of decent subsistence. The result was, that no one ever thought of being satisfied with his pay or salary, and that all were intent upon discovering indirect means of acquiring wealth. Still all these circumstances tend only to palliate, not to justify, the conduct of Clive and his colleagues. It is by no means clear, that a commercial servant can, with propriety, receive presents from persons whose interests may be adverse to those of his employers; and if his right so to act, without reproach, were established, it would be an extravagant extension of the principle to apply it to the conduct of the soldier or the statesman. It may be urged, that commerce was then the ordinary occupation of the servants of the East-India Company, and that they were soldiers and statesmen only occasionally, and by accident. But surely they ought not to have required a monitor to remind them of their altered position, and of the new claims thereby established on them to circumspection. It is indeed difficult to conceive on what principle the select committee could have felt themselves justified in regarding the soubahdarship as an object of bargain and sale. They had no right to dispossess Sooraj-oo-Dowlah but that arising from self-defence—from the incompatibility of his retention of sovereignty

with the safety of those interests which it was their duty to protect: but even if the government of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, had been at their absolute disposal, it could only have been as representatives of the East-India Company; and if they had thus the power to sell, they had certainly no power to apply the proceeds of the sale to any purposes but those of the Company, whose servants they were. It must be presumed that they commenced the war because, in their judgment, the public service required it; and if so, what claim could they have upon the gratitude of Meer Jaffier? They acted for their country and their employers, and not for him. He, indeed, was benefited; but his advantage was not, as far as they were concerned, an object of the war. Their conduct, moreover, tended greatly to throw discredit on the motives from which the war was undertaken. As success was to be rewarded with wealth, it might be imagined that the war had originated rather in the hope of personal than of public advantage. Had this been the case—had the British representatives, from personal views, involved Bengal in a war attended with the loss of many lives, the transfer of a crown, and the death of the miserable youth who wore it, they could not have been regarded as a whit more respectable than bravos who stab for hire. There is no ground, indeed, for ascribing to them such guilt, but they ought to have shrunk from the possibility of its imputation. They ought to have refrained from setting an example which might, at a future time, be followed

CHAP. IV. in a spirit of the most atrocious recklessness. So far from seeking, they ought to have put aside the tempting gifts of Meer Jaffier, and have looked to their employers at home for their reward. It might —it probably would have been, less magnificent— but it would have been earned without dishonour, and might have been enjoyed without shame. Clive, when subsequently put on his defence, cast doubts upon the liberality of the Company, and upon the probability of his obtaining from them an adequate reward. Such a line of defence can satisfy no one. If men may abandon the right path when the wrong appears more profitable, there is an end of all moral restraint.

It seems, indeed, at this time to have been too generally thought that the ethics of Europe were not applicable to Asia, and their plainest rules were violated without hesitation. Englishmen sometimes manifested a degree of cupidity, which might rival that of the most rapacious servants of the worst Oriental governments. They seem to have thought principally, if not solely, of the means of amassing fortunes, and to have acted as though they were in India for no other purpose. The leaven of rapacity which at that time pervaded all Indian affairs was, it is true, the natural result of a vicious system, and happy is it, both for England and India, that it has since given place to a better; yet even while that system continued—even though the East-India Company did not forbid men engaged in important political or military duties from enriching themselves at

the expense of the princes benefited by their diplomacy or their arms—it might have been expected that high-minded men would have hesitated to accept wealth, which could not fail to be attended with something of self-reproach, and something of popular odium.*

When these transactions became the subject of parliamentary inquiry, there was another point on which the conduct of Clive and his colleagues was severely arraigned. A wealthy native, named Omichund, has been already mentioned as an assiduous attendant at the court of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, where his influence with the Soubahdar, as well as the information which he had the opportunity of acquiring, had enabled him to render many services to the cause of the English; these were highly estimated by the British resident, whose confidence Omichund appears, at one period, entirely to have possessed. He was aware of the overture made to the English by Loottief; but, in consequence of his being disliked by Meer Jaffier, or, as it

* The spoil of the Soubahdar's treasury, like the booty of Gheriah, became a subject of contention. Admiral Watson, hearing of the good fortune of the select committee, claimed to share in it. Some were willing to admit him to a participation, but others refused. The admiral died soon afterwards; but, after the lapse of some years, his representatives instituted legal proceedings against Clive on account of the claim, which, however, were soon discontinued.

The views and actions of India statesmen and commanders, at this time, present a very discreditable contrast to those of the Marquis Wellesley, who refused the sum of £100,000 from the spoil of Seringapatam, though tendered him by the ministers of the crown in whose disposal it was, and whose power and dignity the marquis had so nobly maintained.

CHAP. IV. was surmised, by the Seits who dreaded his influence, he was not at first entrusted with the secret of the conspiracy, which ended in the deposition and death of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah. It was difficult, however, long to evade the penetration of Omichund, and impossible to prevent his entertaining suspicions. Mr. Watts, therefore, appears to have thought it the most expedient plan to apprize him of the confederacy of the English with Meer Jaffier, and to secure his co-operation. His friendship might be useful; his enmity would certainly be dangerous.

Omichund knew well that none of the native agents in the proposed change would engage in the attempt without the prospect of gain, and he probably inferred that their European associates had similar views. It was not, therefore, to be expected that he should neglect to stipulate for some advantage to himself. He represented, and certainly with truth, that, connecting himself with the designs of the conspirators, he incurred risk both to his person and his fortune—the latter, very probably, was in his estimation the more dreadful—and he urged, therefore, that he ought to have a sufficient interest in the success of the plan to counterbalance the hazard of its failure. Assuming that men may lawfully engage in revolutions for reward, it seems impossible to dispute the reasonableness of Omichund's views. He was under no obligation to serve the English, or to promote the ambitious views of Meer Jaffier; and the British resident, who was well acquainted with his character, must, when he imparted the fatal

secret, have been aware that from no living man was there less hope of receiving disinterested assistance.

Had Omichund demanded any compensation of moderate amount, it would perhaps have been bestowed. But his claim was framed on the suggestions of that master passion to which he was a slave, and with reference to the relative situation of the English and himself. He knew that they were in his power—that a word from him might frustrate the success of the conspiracy, disappoint all the hopes founded on it, and possibly involve the British interests in destruction. Desire and circumstance thus combining to remove all restraint upon the extent of his demand, Omichund required five per cent. on all the money in the Soubahdar's treasury, and a portion of his jewels. This Mr. Watts did not feel justified in promising; but in the articles of treaty, forwarded by him to the committee, was one securing to Omichund thirty lacs of rupees.

The committee were astonished at the vastness of the sum, but dreaded the consequences of refusing it. Omichund might betray the secret, and it is said that he threatened to do so if his claim were rejected. In this emergency, Clive suggested the means of at once disarming his threatened hostility and sparing the Soubahdar's treasury. Omichund's interests were to be protected by a special clause in the treaty. Two treaties were drawn up: one, written on white paper, contained no reference to Omichund; another, written upon red paper, contained all the stipulations of the white

CHAP. IV. treaty, and in addition an article in favour of Omichund, to deceive whom was the only purpose for which it existed. But a new difficulty occurred. The select committee had no hesitation in signing both the treaties; but Admiral Watson refused his signature to the mock document, and the absence of his name, it was foreseen, would excite the suspicion of so wary a man as Omichund. Here again Clive had an expedient ready. It was to attach the Admiral's name by another hand.* The two treaties were accordingly rendered complete, and the red one answered its purpose. Omichund kept the secret of the conspirators, Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was dethroned, and Meer Jaffier elevated to his place.

The sequel of the tale is melancholy. Omichund embodied the very soul of covetousness. In him,

* It has been questioned whether this took place with the consent of the admiral or not. A witness before the Select Committee, 1772 (Capt. Brereton), stated distinctly that the admiral refused to give permission for affixing his name to the treaty by another hand. To this testimony there is nothing to oppose but, first, Clive's statement, founded, as it appears, on no distinct recollection, that he had been told that Admiral Watson had given the desired permission; and secondly, an expression alleged to have dropped from the admiral, to the effect that "he had not signed it, but had left them to do as they please." It would not be easy to torture the last phrase into an expression of his having consented that his name should be signed by another; and the suspicion that he would endeavour to screen himself by such a subterfuge, is altogether discountenanced by Admiral Watson's straightforward and manly character. But, as far as Clive's reputation is concerned, the question is of no moment, as he declared (Evidence in First Report, p. 154) "that he would have ordered his (Admiral Watson's) name to be put, whether he had consented or not."

avarice had attained that stage when it becomes a disease rather than a passion of the mind. He had passed a long life in unceasing labours to increase his wealth; and he flattered himself that, by one master stroke, he had added to his former accumulations a sum which was in itself a regal fortune. He had not been without fear that some deception might be practised upon him; but he had ascertained that his claim was recognized in a treaty signed by all the English authorities, and that the good faith of the British government was thus solemnly pledged to its discharge. He could not have been without anxiety as to the success of the attempt in which he had so large a stake; but the arms of the English were victorious, and the sovereign of their choice occupied the throne. Nothing therefore seemed now to stand between him and the gratification of his desires; and in the full expectation that he was about to receive that for which he had bargained, he attended a meeting of the principal parties concerned in the revolution, held for the purpose of considering the state of the Soubahdar's treasury, and the mode of carrying out the pecuniary provisions of the treaty. That document was produced and read. Omichund became agitated, and said:—"This cannot be the treaty; it was a red treaty that I saw." Clive coolly replied, "Yes, but this is a white one;" and, turning to Scrafton, who spoke the native language more perfectly than himself, he said, "it is now time to undeceive Omichund." The process of undeceiving the miserable man was short

CHAP. IV. and simple. In compliance with the suggestion of Clive, Scrafton said:—"Omichund, the red treaty is a trick, you are to have nothing;" and he needed not to say more. The senses of Omichund had fled; he fell back in a swoon, from which he recovered only to linger out the remnant of his life in a state of idiocy.

On this transaction it is scarcely necessary to offer an opinion. Clive indeed maintained, that Omichund was a villain, and that it was fair to counteract his villany by any means, however base. The villany of Omichund seems to have consisted principally in this—that he was anxious to get as much money as possible for his services; and in this feeling it is certain his European employers largely participated. It is said, indeed, that he threatened to betray the secret of the conspiracy to Sooraj-oo-Dowlah; and Orme, in contemplation of such a consequence, rises into a strain of lofty indignation. "If so," says he, "the boldest iniquity could not go further." But both the historian and the English authorities seem to have forgotten that, had Omichund carried his threat into execution, his conduct would not have been worse than that which they were encouraging and rewarding in others—it may be added, which they were themselves practising. They were making common cause with men who, whatever their provocations, were traitors, and cowardly ones; men who, afraid to draw the sword in redress of the wrongs of which they complained, were yet silently seeking the overthrow of the sovereign to whom they owed

sworn allegiance, and to whom they yet assiduously tendered all the homage which the lip or the knee can offer. Although, therefore, the demand of Omichund might be deemed extravagant, and his threatened exposure of the conspiracy be felt as inconvenient, there was little reason for the burst of virtuous surprise with which the communication of his delinquency was received. He was but one among many bent upon advancing his own interest, and reckless of the means by which his purpose might be accomplished.

But although Omichund was not worse than those around him, it is certain that he was an artful and unprincipled man; and it is to be determined whether or not it be lawful to overreach such a person by the use of his own weapons. To answer the question satisfactorily, the relative position of the parties must be considered. Where an avowed state of hostility exists, the common consent of mankind has recognized the lawfulness of certain acts which under other circumstances would be criminal. Thus, in the operations of war, the employment of stratagems or feints to mislead an enemy is perfectly consistent with the rules of honour. The reason is, that no confidence exists between the parties, and none therefore is violated. By this reason also the limits of lawful stratagem are determined. It would not be justifiable to employ a flag of truce to draw an enemy into an ambuscade, because it is a symbol of confidence, and a pledge of the temporary sus-

CHAP. IV. pension of hostility. The just principle therefore is, that wherever confidence is professed, deception is forbidden; and applying this principle to the transaction with Omichund, its merits may very soon be decided. The British authorities treated Omichund as a friend; they used him as an instrument for promoting their views, and when they had no longer any thing to hope or fear from him, turned round and denied him not only his promised reward, but all reward whatever. When his demand was made, two courses were open to them. They might have refused compliance and hazarded the consequences. Omichund might thereupon have betrayed them; but part of his fortune was in the power of the English, and Omichund was one of the most cautious of mankind. If, however, Clive and the select committee thought this risk too great, and were prepared to stop the mouth of the informer by the promise of a vast bribe, they should have felt that both personal and public honour required them to pay it. The judgment of Orme on the question is just. The sums expected by Omichund, says he, "should have been paid to him, and he left to enjoy them in oblivion and contempt." It has been said that Meer Jaffier was so much opposed to such an arrangement, that he would have broken off the alliance rather than have consented; but Meer Jaffier did not value a throne so lightly, as to relinquish it for the sake of disappointing a greedy man of a per-centage upon the wealth appended to it; nor can it be imagined

that the fertile invention of Clive could have been at a loss for means to overcome the scruples of the usurper if any existed.

The biographer of Clive* has argued that the good faith of the British Government was not involved in the transaction with Omichund, because that person was not a party to the treaty, and Meer Jaffier, with whom it was concluded, was not deceived. "This distinction," he says, "is important;" but important as it may be, it is certainly too refined for ordinary understandings to appreciate or even to apprehend. If the treaty bound the contracting parties at all, it bound them to the performance of every thing which they thereby undertook to perform; and the breach of an engagement made for the benefit of a third party is just as dishonest and disgraceful as though the injury were inflicted on one of those who subscribed the treaty. "Both these parties"—Meer Jaffier and the Committee—says the authority just quoted, "were agreeing to the fictitious treaty, which was prepared for the sole purpose of being shewn to Omichund." The argument seems to be this—that the representatives of two governments concluding a treaty are bound to observe good faith towards each other; but they may insert an article for the express purpose of cheating a third party, and although they, as individuals, may be blamed for the deceit, the governments which they represent neither incur responsibility nor suffer disgrace. It would seem, too, that in the judgment of the same author,

* Sir John Malcolm. Life, vol. i. page 298.

CHAP. IV. the obligation to fulfil an engagement was removed by the fact of its being entered into with an intention not to fulfil it. "The treaty," he says, "was prepared for the sole purpose of being shewn to Omichund"—it answered its purpose, and there was an end. Nothing that could be furnished by the most recondite resources of jesuitical sophistry, nothing that can be drawn from the archives of the most profligate diplomacy, can exceed this. But truth and right cannot thus be refined away. After listening to all that the ingenuity of special pleading can offer in extenuation of the perfidious treatment of Omichund, sound reason and honest feeling will unite in declaring the transaction not only disgraceful to those immediately engaged in it, but injurious to the honour of the nation which they represented. To the good faith of that nation Omichund had borne public testimony. On one occasion, when Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, displeased with the movements of the English against the French at Chandernagore, angrily demanded of Omichund whether the English intended to observe the treaty with him or not, he answered, that the English were famous throughout the world for their good faith, insomuch that a man in England who told a falsehood was utterly disgraced; and he concluded by the most solemn averment of his belief that the English would not break the treaty.* This testimony was of some value, for it induced the Soubahdar to abstain from an interposition on behalf of the French at Chandernagore.

* Orme's History, vol. ii. page 137.

which would have been most inconvenient to the English. If, under the calamity which overshadowed the latter days of Omichund, there were any moments when enough remained of memory and of judgment to call back this scene and to compare it with his later experience, what must have been the feelings by which the comparison was attended?

On the means by which Admiral Watson's name became attached to the red treaty observation would be superfluous. It is one of those acts, the scandal of which no bitterness of censure can aggravate nor any ingenuity excuse. Left in its naked dishonour, there is no danger of an erroneous judgment being passed upon it.

The conduct of the English authorities in commencing the war with Sooraj-oo-Dowlah is far more easily vindicated than some of the acts by which it was marked. The English had suffered great wrongs from the Soubahdar; and though some degree of reparation had been promised, it was clear that he cherished a determination not to fulfil any part of the treaty, if the performance could possibly be evaded. It was not less certain that his hatred of the English was undiminished,—that he only waited a favourable opportunity to attack them,—and that, when it arrived, the execution of his purpose would probably be attended by atrocities not inferior to those which had marked his entrance into Calcutta. Clive and his colleagues might have decided calmly to wait the time when Sooraj-oo-Dowlah should feel himself strong enough to strike the meditated

CHAP. IV. blow, or they might have turned their backs upon the success which had already waited on their arms, and abandoned for ever the British settlements in Bengal. To have adopted the former of these courses would have manifested the highest degree of folly; to have chosen the latter would have argued the extreme of pusillanimity. Nothing remained but to anticipate the active hostility of the Soubahdar, to deprive him of the advantage of choosing his own time for terminating the hollow peace which subsisted, in form indeed, but scarcely in fact; and by a bold and vigorous stroke to destroy the power which, left unmolested, would, ere long, fall upon the English in a spirit of rancorous hate, deeply seated, long cherished, and envenomed by the mortifying recollection of recent defeat. But besides the hopelessness of permanently maintaining relations of peace with Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, there was another motive to a prompt and decisive course. The contest which had been waged for years between the English and French for the supremacy in India was not decided, and the depression of the English would have been accompanied by the elevation of their European enemies. The Soubahdar concluded a treaty of alliance with the English, by which the enemies of either of the contracting parties were to be regarded as enemies of both. He then sought the friendship of the French, with whom his allies were at war, and entreated the aid of the former to drive the latter out of Bengal. Such were the grounds on which the war with Sooraj-oo-Dowlah

was commenced, and their sufficiency can scarcely be denied, except by those who question the lawfulness of war altogether.

The praise due to the choice of a wise and vigorous course, in preference to wretched expedients which sooner or later must have led to the destruction of the British interests, belongs exclusively to Clive. It was he who recommended it to his colleagues, and who persisted in his adherence to it when they began to waver. Admiral Watson, though cordially approving of the objects of the war, seems to have entertained some fears for the result.* Clive, too, must have known the danger of failure; but being not less alive to the greater danger of quiescence, he persevered. As the moment of struggle approached, the contemplation of its possible consequences clouded even his sanguine and buoyant spirit; but the feeling was transient, and he advanced to triumph.

The applause which is justly due to the statesmanlike views of Clive cannot, however, be extended to all the means to which he resorted in realizing them. He cannot be blamed for uniting with Meer Jaffier, because when the deposition of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was decreed it was necessary that his place should be supplied by some one; and Meer Jaffier, as a man of high rank and a member of the

* In a letter to Clive, promising the assistance of a body of seamen which had been requested, he says, "I don't think your letter conveys the most promising appearance of success. You cannot therefore be too cautious to prevent a false step being taken, which might be of very fatal consequences to our affairs."

CHAP. IV. royal house, had claims which probably could not be surpassed by those of any other candidate. The conspiracy, of which that person was the head, was moreover formed without reference to Clive. The discontented servants of the Soubahdar sought his assistance, and their views coinciding with the interests of his country, he gave it. Thus far Clive incurs no blame. But the wretched hypocrisy subsequently practised towards the unhappy prince reflects disgrace upon all the confederated parties; and the deepest stain cleaves to those who, trained in European habits, feelings, and modes of thought, seem altogether to have forgotten them in the climate of Asia. Nothing can be more clear than that Clive violated a great and important principle of morals, by continuing to profess friendly feelings towards the Soubahdar, and to express a desire for the peaceful adjustment of all differences, long after the train was laid for the destruction of that prince, and even up to the very moment when the explosion was about to take place. Clive broke up his camp and removed his troops into garrison, with a view to obviate suspicion as to his entertaining hostile intentions, and to this step in itself no reasonable objection can be taken. He had a right to make this disposition of his troops, and he was not bound to explain why he made it. He might, without reproach, have left the movement to receive any interpretation which the Soubahdar might put upon it; and if he erred, Clive was under no obligation to undeceive him. But he did not so leave it. He addressed the Soubahdar

in what he calls "a soothing letter," and it was followed by others of like character; while in the same communication which apprized Mr. Watts of these "soothing" epistles, he says, "tell Meer Jaffier to fear nothing; that I will join him with five thousand men who never turned their backs; and that if he fails in seizing him (the Soubahdar) we shall be strong enough to drive him out of the country." The agents of Clive were not less active than their employer in "soothing" the fated prince. Omichund, especially, was assiduous in labouring to remove from the Soubahdar's mind all suspicion of co-operation between his disaffected servants and the English—how he was rewarded has already been seen.*

The character of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah was alike despicable and hateful. He was destitute of every quality that can inspire sympathy or command respect. His capricious tyranny goaded his subjects to resistance; and there was abundant reason why the English should not hesitate to avail themselves of the advantage thus offered. Their cause was good; and it is only to be lamented that it was not prosecuted in a more dignified and honest spirit.

* The dissimulation practised by Clive and his agents is amply illustrated in the second volume of Orme's History, and the first of Sir John Malcolm's Life of Clive.

CHAPTER V.

CHAP. V. THE dispatch to Bengal of a force, large with reference to the means of the British Government, had left the authorities at Madras without the means of displaying much vigour in the Carnatic. The nabob, Mahomet Ali, continued to be embarrassed by the impossibility of collecting his revenues; and, to add to his difficulties, two of his brothers availed themselves of his weakness to raise the standard of rebellion. Col. Forde with a small force proceeded to Nellore, to aid the nabob's army in reducing one of them to obedience, but returned without success.

To counteract the designs of the other, Captain Calliaud, who then commanded at Trichinopoly, was ordered to march to Tinnevelly. After some delay, occasioned chiefly by want of money, he marched to reduce the fort of Madura. An attempt to take the place by surprise failed; and Captain Calliaud was preparing to repeat his attack in the hope of being assisted from within, when he was recalled to Trichinopoly by intelligence that the French were in sight of that place. He did not receive the news till
A. D. 1757. three o'clock on the 21st of May. At six he was on his march. It was commenced without tents, bag-

gage, or artillery. The men bore their own food; a few bullocks were taken to carry ammunition, and persons attached to the commissariat were sent forward to make the necessary arrangements for refreshment at the different places of halt.

The force which menaced Trichinopoly was under the command of M. d'Autueil. Great exertions had been made to collect it. The French garrisons were drained of their effective men, and the duties left to be performed by invalids, assisted at Pondicherry by the European inhabitants. The entire force thus set at liberty for an attack on Trichinopoly amounted to one thousand Europeans, infantry and artillery, one hundred and fifty European cavalry, and three thousand sepoys, supported by several field-pieces.

The force of the English in Trichinopoly consisted of one hundred and fifty European infantry, fifteen artillery-men, and seven hundred sepoys. There were also six hundred men furnished by Tondiman, a native chief, and the king of Tanjore, and about four hundred belonging to Mahomet Ali. These added considerably to the number, but little to the strength of the garrison. The greater part of these auxiliaries are represented by Orme as being "only fit for night-watches; nor," he adds, "for that, without being watched themselves." There was within Trichinopoly another body of men, whose absence was, under the circumstances, much to be desired. These were five hundred French prisoners. It was known that they maintained a correspondence with their countrymen without; and the ex-

CHAP. V. pectation of their being able to emancipate themselves from restraint during the attack and aid its objects, was believed to have encouraged the present attempt against the city.

A. D. 1757. On the 15th of May the enemy began to throw shells into the town. The bombardment was continued through four successive days, when M. d'Autueil made a formal demand of surrender. Captain Smith, who held the chief command in the absence of Captain Calliaud, answered by an avowal of his determination to maintain the town. It was believed that this would be followed by an attempt to carry the place by assault on the succeeding night, and some indications of such an intention were made. The arrival of Captain Calliaud and his troops was consequently looked for with great anxiety, and at six o'clock in the evening of the 25th they were only twelve miles distant from Trichinopoly. The march had thus far been performed in safety; but a greater difficulty remained. The troops of the enemy had been so disposed as to command every line by which, in ordinary circumstances, the city could be approached from the direction of Captain Calliaud's advance, and it was discovered that some spies had mixed with the English troops, for the purpose of ascertaining the precise route which would be taken. These persons Captain Calliaud suffered to pursue their avocations undisturbed, as he designed to make them the instruments of misleading those by whom they were sent. Having, to all appearance, determined upon the road by which he would seek to

enter the town, he pursued it for about six miles; it was then becoming dark, and the French spies, satisfied that they were in possession of the intentions of the British commander, dropped off to communicate them to their employers. Captain Calliaud then changed his track, striking off to a direction where the enemy had made no preparation, not anticipating the possibility of any attempt being made to pass that way. The track chosen by Captain Calliaud lay over rice fields, which being in a state of irrigation were thus converted into one continuous swamp. The march across them occupied seven hours, although the distance to be traversed was only about as many miles, for every step was taken knee-deep in mud. The break of day brought the troops to firmer ground, and gladdened their sight by a view of the city and fort of Trichinopoly at no great distance. Captain Smith drew out a part of his garrison, with two field-pieces, to protect the reinforcement against any attempt to intercept them; but none was made, and the detachment entered the fort amidst the shouts of their comrades, their commander marching at their head. His attention had been diverted to so many points during this extraordinary march, that he had undergone more fatigue than any of his men; and when he led them into the fort, he was obliged, from weakness, to be supported by two grenadiers. The enemy still continued on the watch at the point where the report of his spies had led him to expect the advance of the English party, and it was not till the triumphant discharge of

CHAP. V. twenty-one pieces of cannon announced their safe arrival within the fort, that the French commander began to suspect that he had been misled. The suspicion was soon heightened into certainty. In the evening the French retired to Seringham, and soon afterwards to Pondicherry. The march of Captain Calliaud thus saved Trichinopoly from an attack, and possibly from capture.

The war now continued to be carried on with little vigour or advantage on either side, but with the perpetration of some excesses on both. The English set fire to Wandewash, and the French in retaliation burnt Conjeveram. By these acts, the European nations did little harm to each other, but inflicted great suffering on the native population, who had but a slender interest in the quarrel. The balance of success was, however, on the whole, in favour of the French, who, after acquiring some minor factories belonging to their rival, obtained possession of the important one of Vizagapatam. The English were greatly dispirited by these events, and the expense of maintaining the campaign appears to have been a cause of embarrassment. To add to their difficulties, the Mahratta, Bajee Row, made his appearance to demand *chout*, or tribute, from the Nabob of Arcot. After some discussion, the purchase of his departure was settled at the price of two hundred thousand rupees to be paid down by the nabob, and two hundred and fifty thousand more by orders on his polygars and dependents. The agreement being concluded, the nabob transferred the completion of

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his part of it to his English allies, requesting that they would furnish the money out of the rents which he had assigned to them for the expenses of the war. This was neither convenient nor as a matter of precedent desirable, but it was not easy to evade the demand. Morari Row and some other chiefs tendered their alliance to aid in resisting the claim of Bajee Row, but the English had no greater desire for their presence than for that of the collector of the tribute. Some attempts were made to postpone the settlement of the claim in hope of a change of circumstances, and others to attach certain conditions to its discharge, but all was fruitless. The English, says Orme, "had no alternative but to pay or fight." They had no troops to spare for the latter duty, and they were afraid of accepting the assistance that was offered by their neighbours; they therefore preferred the former branch of the alternative, and the representative of Bajee Row departed laden with coin and bills.

A. D. 1757.

Early in September, a French fleet of twelve ships appeared in Pondicherry roads. By the council of Fort St. David it was mistaken for an English force. A messenger was accordingly sent to bear to the admiral the compliments of the authorities, as well as a letter conveying some information which it was thought desirable to communicate. The messenger did not become aware of the mistake under which he had been dispatched until it was too late for remedy. He had therefore no choice but to conceal the letter and yield himself a prisoner. For some time the

CHAP. V. movements of the French fleet were regarded with great anxiety, but the motives by which they were guided appeared involved in great mystery. The fleet had on board a French regiment, under the command of the Marquis de Soupires, who bore a commission, giving him the direction and command of all military operations. The command of the squadron was held by M. Bouvet, who had been taken on board at the island of Bourbon, and who had the reputation of being one of the ablest men connected with the French marine. Besides the troops, the fleet had on board some battering cannon and mortars, as well as a large supply of bombs and balls. The troops having been landed at Pondicherry, the squadron suddenly disappeared, leaving the English utterly unable to account for its departure. The cause of it was the discovery of the letter from the Council of Fort St. David, and which the messenger had placed between two planks of the boat in which he had proceeded. Among other matters referred to in that letter, was the probability of the arrival by the middle of September of Admiral Watson, with the ships under his command, from Bengal; and from the junction of these with the squadron from England great results were anticipated. This intelligence so much disconcerted M. Bouvet, that he determined not to wait the chance of encountering a force superior to his own. He declared that he had done enough in landing the troops and should immediately sail back to the islands. So great was his haste, that he refused to disembark the

artillery and heavy ammunition, on account of the time required to land them, and to take in ballast to supply their place. The capture of the messenger of the Council of Fort St. David and the discovery of his letter were thus the means of relieving the English from the annoyance which was expected from the French fleet. CHAP. V.

On the day on which Soupires landed at Pondicherry, Madura surrendered to the English. Captain Calliaud being satisfied that, for a time at least, Trichinopoly was in safety, had returned to Madura in July. Some attempts had been made to reduce the place during his absence, but they failed, and those subsequently made were attended with no better success. It yielded at last to the potent influence of money. About two-thirds of the amount was destined for the liquidation of the arrears of pay due to the troops who had defended the place, the remainder for presents to the commander and principal officers.* A. D. 1757.

In October, the French obtained possession of Chittapet, a place of some strength. It was gallantly defended by the killadar in command, and might probably have been saved had the English Government afforded any assistance; but Mahomet Ali had conceived a dislike to the killadar, and his representations were suffered to influence the con- A. D. 1757.

* The authorities vary as to the exact sum paid in this transaction. Orme says 150,000 rupees; but the aggregate of various sums which he gives in detail is 158,000 rupees. Cambridge (Transactions on the Coast of Coromandel) states the sum to have been 170,000 rupees.

CHAP. V. duct of the English. Trinomaly, and some other forts of inferior importance, were soon afterwards added to the acquisitions of the French, who lost no time in taking advantage of their successes by making arrangements for securing the revenues of the districts which fell into their power.

A. D. 1758. The earlier months of the year 1758 were passed in comparative inactivity; but on the 28th of April a French squadron of twelve sail was descried standing in for the road of Fort St. David. Part of these ships had sailed from France in the preceding year, having on board a military force commanded by the Count de Lally, who had been appointed governor-general of all the French possessions and establishments in India. After encountering much bad weather and suffering severely from contagious disease, the expedition arrived at the Isle of France, where it was strengthened by the addition of some of the ships which the fears of M. Bouvet had, a few months before, so precipitately withdrawn from Pondicherry.

Lally lost no time in proclaiming his authority and establishing means for effecting the objects of the expedition. He proceeded with two of the ships to Pondicherry, and one purpose of his visit was manifested on the following morning, by the entry of a detachment of French troops within the bounds of Fort St. David. They were to have been joined by the troops from the fleet, but this was prevented by the appearance of an English squadron, which had discovered and bore down upon the

French ships almost as soon as Lally had departed to Pondicherry. The English squadron was composed of the ships from Bengal which had returned in February under Admiral Pocock, and some others which had arrived under the command of Admiral Stevens. An action ensued, in which the French suffered severely in loss of men, and the English in damage to their ships, but neither party could claim a victory. The French ships, from having sustained less injury in their masts and rigging, were enabled to outsail the English, and with the exception of one, which was stranded, they reached Pondicherry in safety. CHAP. V.

Admiral Pocock laboured to bring the French squadron once more to action, but the winds and currents, together with the dilapidated state of one of the English ships, aided the opposite views of the French commander, M. d'Aché, who, contrary to the wishes of Lally, was above all things anxious to avoid an engagement. His reluctance to fight received some countenance from the fact of a large number of his men being disabled by sickness. To remove this ground of objection, Lally offered reinforcements to supply the place of the sick, and M. d'Aché was at last compelled to proceed to sea; but, instead of bearing down on the English squadron, which was unable to work up to him, he "kept the wind, plying for Fort St. David."* On 1st June A. D. 1758. he was observed working into the roads, and this probably influenced the determination of those who

* Orme's History, vol. ii. page 312.

CHAP. V. defended the English settlement. On the land side, it was attacked by two thousand five hundred Europeans, and about the same number of sepoys. The garrison consisted of sixteen hundred natives and upwards of six hundred Europeans, two hundred and fifty of whom were seamen. A vigorous bombardment had for some time been carried on, and though the enemy had made no breach, they had dismounted some of the guns, disabled the carriages, and inflicted serious injury on parts of the works. The tanks and reservoirs had suffered, and water could only be procured under cover of the night. The stock of ammunition also began to fail, much having been wasted. "The fort continued," says Orme, "to lavish away their fire night and day on every thing they saw, heard, or suspected."* In addition to these circumstances, the native troops deserted in great numbers, and part of the Europeans are represented to have been drunken, disorderly, and disobedient.
A. D. 1758. On the 2nd June, terms of capitulation were proposed by the besieged, and on the evening of that day the place was surrendered. Cuddalore had been abandoned almost immediately after the French appeared before it.

The surrender of Fort St. David excited both alarm and indignation at Madras. A court of inquiry was appointed, and their report, while it exonerated the commander, Major Porlier, from cowardice, condemned his arrangements for the defence, expressed an opinion that the place might have held

* History, vol. ii. page 310.

out much longer, and declared the terms on which it surrendered shameful.* Certain it is, that the defence of Fort St. David cannot be regarded as among the operations which have shed lustre on the British name in India. CHAP. V.

The fall of Fort St. David was immediately followed by that of Devi-cottah, and the success of the French arms appeared to Lally to warrant his indulging in a triumphal entry into Pondicherry, after the manner of his vain and unfortunate predecessor, Dupleix.

An attack upon Madras would have been the next step taken by the French governor-general had he not laboured under a deficiency of money, which he was anxious, in the first instance, to supply. A bond for a considerable sum, given by the king of Tanjore to Chunda Sahib, had remained several years in possession of the government of Pondicherry, and, to supply the necessities of that government, it was now determined to demand payment of it. To enforce the demand, Lally took the field, and advanced with a considerable force towards Tanjore; but the arrangements for the campaign were so miserably imperfect, that his troops were often in danger of perishing from hunger. His approach to the capital of Tanjore, however, created alarm, and led to negotiations, conducted in such a spirit as might be expected, where one party was bent upon obtaining money at all

* Cambridge's Transactions on the Coast of Coromandel, page 131.

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events, and the other resolved not to part with any if it were possible to avoid it. The king of Tanjore had, in the first instance, sought assistance from Trichinopoly, and Captain Calliaud had afforded it to an extent proportioned to his ability. Subsequently a treaty was concluded between Lally and the government of Tanjore, by which the former undertook to march immediately against Trichinopoly. This arrangement was in turn frustrated by fresh misunderstandings between the parties to it, and the dispute became so warm that Lally threatened to transport the king and his family to the island of Mauritius as slaves. This revived the affection of that sovereign for the English, and on his pressing solicitation, additional aid was furnished from Trichinopoly.

Lally erected two batteries, and after five days' firing had made a breach about six feet wide, when it was discovered that the army was nearly destitute both of ammunition and provisions. At this time also Lally received intelligence that the French and English squadrons had again been engaged, and that the latter threatened a descent upon Karical, to which place Lally looked for the means of relieving the distress of his army. Like the former naval engagement, this had been indecisive; and it further resembled it, inasmuch as the English had suffered more severely in their ships, and the French in loss of men.

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On the 9th August, Lally had recourse to the usual expedient by which men, surrounded by difficulties, seek to relieve themselves from the responsi-

bility of choice. He called a council of war, which afforded another illustration of Orme's remark, that such a body rarely decides for action. Lally's council was composed of twelve officers, of whom only two advised an assault, while ten declared for retreat. Lally did not, like Clive, nullify the decision of the council on his own responsibility. Preparations were commenced for breaking up the camp; the sick and wounded were sent away immediately, and the following day was fixed for the march of the rest.

Monackjee, the Tanjore general, was soon apprized of the determination to raise the siege, and he was not slow in ascribing the movement to its real cause, the want of means to carry it on. A reinforcement from Trichinopoly happening to arrive at this time, Monackjee resolved with its assistance to attack the French camp. The attack was characteristically commenced by a piece of treachery. At the dawn of day, fifty horsemen rode leisurely from the city towards the camp. On being challenged by the advanced guard, they said that they were come to offer their services to the French, and desired to see the general. They were conducted to his quarters, and halting at a short distance from the choultry where he slept, their leader advanced to confer with him. Lally left the choultry to receive his visitor, by whose hands he would probably have been dismissed from the cares and toils of warfare, had not the operation of opium led one of the stranger horsemen to commit an act which could not be reconciled with friendly intentions. Quitting his rank, he gal-

CHAP. V. loped toward a tumbril loaded with powder, into which he fired his pistol. The frantic wretch was blown to pieces by the explosion of which he had been the cause, and an alarm being thus raised the guard at the choultry rushed forward to protect their commander. In performing this duty they were charged by the horsemen, but their steady fire threw the assailants into confusion, and most of them galloped into a tank which they did not perceive, till it was too late to avoid it. In the meantime the camp was attacked at various points, but the Tanjoreans were compelled to retire with heavy loss.

The retreat of the French was attended with great suffering, and on the road Lally received information that d'Aché, the commander of the French squadron, had announced to the council of Pondicherry his determination to return without delay to the Isle of France. Lally dispatched the Count d'Estaigne to dissuade him from such a proceeding; but the endeavours of the count were ineffectual to induce d'Aché either to hazard another engagement, or to abandon his intention of returning to the islands. Lally himself, who arrived shortly afterwards, was not more fortunate. D'Aché persisted, and his determination was, it is said, supported by the unanimous opinion of his captains. With some difficulty he consented to leave behind him five hundred seamen and marines, to serve on shore; and on
A.D. 1758. the 3rd September he sailed with all his ships for the Island of Mauritius.

Lally was greatly mortified by the ill success of his

campaign against Tanjore. To alleviate the disgrace of its failure, and to supply his pecuniary wants, he now projected an expedition to Arcot. In this he was somewhat more fortunate; and after the capture of some places of minor importance, he made a triumphal entry into the city of Arcot, which had yielded not to the force of his arms but to the effect of large promises made to the officer in command.

But, though the vanity of Lally was gratified, his pecuniary resources were not improved by his success. His conquests did not reimburse the expense of making them, and the treasury of Pondicherry remained in an exhausted state. Lally, too, had made a false step in neglecting to secure the fort of Chingleput, which commanded the country from which, in the event of a siege, Madras must mainly depend for supplies. This place was garrisoned only by a few retainers of one of the nabob's dependents by whom the district was rented, and if attacked must have fallen an easy prize. The anxiety of the council at Madras for the safety of their principal settlement had led them to concentrate there nearly all the force at their disposal: in consequence, several posts had been abandoned to the enemy. The council, however, were duly sensible of the importance of Chingleput, and they took the first opportunity afforded by the arrival of reinforcements from England to place it in a respectable state of defence. The march of the party of sepoys first dispatched thither stopped the advance of a French detachment who were in motion to attack the place.

CHAP. V. The pressing wants of the French government were at length relieved by a small supply of money. Part of it was obtained from the Brahmins in charge of the pagoda at Tripetty, part was received from the island of Mauritius, and part Lally is said to have contributed from his own resources. This enabled him to put in motion his entire force for the reduction of Madras. It now became a question whether or not the seat of the British presidency should be attacked without previously reducing Chingleput. Lally, with characteristic rashness and impatience, determined to push onward, leaving Chingleput in his A. D. 1758. rear; and by the middle of December the French army were in sight of Madras. Their force consisted of two thousand seven hundred European and four thousand native troops. To defend the place the English had nearly one thousand eight hundred European troops, two thousand two hundred sepoys, and about two hundred of the nabob's cavalry, upon whom, however, no dependence could be rested.

The enemy soon gained possession of the Black Town, in the plunder of which a quantity of arrack having been found, the consequences were ere long manifested. The English being apprized of what had taken place, made a sally under Colonel Draper; and such was the state of the French army, that the approach of the English was first made known to them by the beating of their drums in the streets of the town. The fire of the English musquetry, aided by that of two field-pieces, was very destructive,

and a French regiment, which had been drawn up to oppose them, soon fell into confusion and fled. At this moment Colonel Draper called upon his men to cease firing, and follow him to take possession of four of the enemy's guns, to which he ran up, and discharged a pistol at the head of an officer who remained by them, but without effect. A pistol-shot being returned by the French officer with no better success, he was on the point of surrendering the guns, when Colonel Draper perceived that no more than four of his men had followed him. The French now gaining confidence from the hesitation of their opponents, returned in considerable numbers; and of the four gallant men who accompanied their commander, two were killed, the other two being severely wounded. The fight was, however, protracted for some time; but finally the English retreated with a considerable loss of men as well as that of their two field-pieces. Among those mortally wounded was Major Porlier, the unfortunate officer who commanded at Fort St. David when that place surrendered to the French. Having been blamed, and not without apparent reason, for his conduct on that occasion, he seems to have been anxious to lose no opportunity of shewing that he was not deficient in personal courage. Under the influence of this feeling, he had requested permission to accompany Colonel Draper's party as a volunteer, and while thus engaged received a wound of which he soon afterwards died. The loss of the French was not less severe than that of the English;

CHAP. V. several of their officers were killed, and the Count d'Estaigne was made prisoner.

The sally, though in some degree justified by the state of the enemy's troops, had no effect but that of weakening the garrison to the extent of about two hundred men. So little impression did it make on those best qualified to form a judgment, that one of the most experienced of the French officers proposed that a general assault should be made on the ensuing night, in four divisions, he leading the principal one. "It was lucky," says Orme, "that his advice was not followed." But if the English gained no advantage in this affair, the French acquired little honour. Lally expressed great displeasure because his own regiment had not marched on the first alarm, and the blame of not bringing it up was cast upon M. Bussy, who had been recalled by Lally from the court of Salabat Jung, from jealousy, as it has been alleged, of his abilities and influence. Bussy had exerted himself to get the regiment under arms, and he excused the delay in marching by ascribing it to the want of orders. In regard to strict military rule, Bussy was undoubtedly right, though probably, had he been on more friendly terms with Lally, he would have thought that the emergency justified some relaxation. But the French cause suffered little from Bussy's deference to his commander, for, had the men been brought up at once, they were in such a state of intoxication, that they would have been incapable of rendering service.

Though miserably deficient in nearly all the means

of conducting a siege with a probability of success, Lally erected batteries, and on the 2nd of January commenced firing. The defence under the governor, Mr. Pigot, was conducted with considerable skill, and in an admirable spirit. Some sallies were made by the besieged, which, however, usually ended in discomfiture; but the communications of the enemy with Pondicherry and the country whence he drew his supplies were greatly impeded by the operations of a body of sepoys under a native commander, named Mahommed Isoof, aided by a detachment from Chingleput under Captain Preston, some native horse commanded by a brother of Mahomet Ali, and some Tanjorine cavalry. An addition to this force being desired, Major Calliaud had been especially deputed to Tanjore to endeavour to obtain it; but the sovereign was persuaded that the fortune of England was on the decline, and so little value did he now attach to its friendship, that its representative was not even received with ordinary courtesy. With some difficulty, however, Major Calliaud prevailed on him to promise a further supply of cavalry, if their arrears of pay were discharged—a promise given in the belief that the condition could not be fulfilled. Major Calliaud applied to the Tanjore agents of the house of Buckanjee, the principal bankers in the Carnatic, but they peremptorily refused to part with any money in exchange for bills on Madras. This refusal encouraged the king to become somewhat more explicit, and he promised that the horse should be ready in four days if the

CHAP. V. money were paid. Major Calliaud now applied to the Dutch government of Negapatam, who professed to be willing to grant a loan; but the terms would have entailed on the English a loss of twenty-five per cent., and the offer was declined. The British negotiator then turned to Trichinopoly, where the house of Buckanjee had also an agent. Here his prospects appeared to brighten, and he obtained the promise of a supply; but again was he doomed to disappointment. Mahomet Ali was at Madras when the French appeared before it, but a besieged town not appearing to him the most agreeable place of residence, he was desirous of quitting it. The English authorities had not the slightest desire to counteract his wishes in this respect, and he accordingly departed with his family by sea for Negapatam. On the passage, his wife gave birth to a child. Arriving at Negapatam, the nabob, through his agent at Tanjore, informed the king that he intended to pass through that city on his way to Trichinopoly, anticipating that the usual honours would be offered him. But the flight of the nabob by sea at a season subject to tempest, and when the situation of his wife peculiarly demanded repose, was regarded as indicating a degree of danger at Madras, which rendered inexpedient any expression of respect for either the English or their allies. Under this impression, the king refused not only to receive the nabob within his capital, but even to visit him without the walls. Major Calliaud endeavoured, though in vain, to establish the appearance of a better feeling, and

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he had good reason to exert himself in the cause, for the circumstances under which Mahomet Ali had departed from Madras, combined with the view of them taken at Tanjore, had alarmed the banker's agent at Trichinopoly, who now retracted his promise of assistance, and refused to furnish money upon any terms. The difficulty was at last obviated. Mr. Norris, a member of the council of Madras who had accompanied Mahomet Ali, was the bearer of a considerable sum destined to defray the expenses of the garrison of Trichinopoly. The urgent want of means to enable Major Calliaud to effect the objects of his mission was held to be a sufficient reason for diverting this sum from its original purpose. The pretext for delay was thus removed, but no horse were furnished. The money, however, which had been obtained was not without effect, for its reputation induced the King to adopt a more friendly bearing towards Mahomet Ali, to whom he now paid a visit with the accustomed ceremonies. To give dignity to the nabob's entrance into Trichinopoly, Major Calliaud put himself at the head of the escort which was to conduct him thither. On quitting that place a few days afterwards, he gave utterance to expressions of strong indignation against the King of Tanjore, in the hope that they might be conveyed to him. Major Calliaud was not deceived in the expectation that his wrath would be reported to the King, nor altogether in the hope that some effect might be produced by it. The King was alarmed, and

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dispatched the promised reinforcement, which, however, proceeded slowly, in consequence of frequent disputes as to the advances to be made to the men, which Major Calliaud was fain to settle as best he might. A far more valuable description of force which accompanied Major Calliaud to the relief of Madras was a body of sepoys from Trichinopoly. With these he arrived at Chingleput on

A. D. 1759.

the 7th of February, having been absent on his mission to Tanjore from the 1st of December. His troops requiring rest, he left them there, allowing himself no repose, but proceeding on the evening of his arrival at Chingleput to the Mount of St. Thomé, where he took the command of the force without the walls engaged in harassing the besiegers, and interrupting their supplies.

Lally had seriously felt the annoyances inflicted by this force. They were, he said, like flies, no sooner beaten off one part than they settled on another, and he resolved to make an effort to relieve himself from their presence. On the morning of the 9th of February the British discovered the enemy advancing upon their post in two bodies, the one consisting of twelve hundred sepoys and five hundred native horse, the other of three hundred European cavalry and six hundred European infantry, with eight field-pieces.* The

* These numbers are given on the authority of Orme; Cambridge gives the French the same number of European infantry, but he makes the number of their sepoys fifteen hundred, that of their European cavalry nearly four hundred, and that of the Mahratta

whole was under the command of a relation of Lally's, bearing the same name with himself. The force available to repel the enemy consisted of two thousand five hundred sepoys and two thousand two hundred native horse, with one hundred and three Europeans, twelve of whom were artillery-men, and ten troopers under the command of Capt. Vasserot, who had recently come out of the town with treasure.* Major Calliaud made the requisite dispositions to resist the attack; and to receive the French cavalry, who were advancing, he formed his native horse, placing himself with Capt. Vasserot and his ten troopers on their left. The ardour of the horsemen appeared perfectly irrepressible; and anticipating the desire of the British commander for their advance, the whole body, in the words of Orme, "set off scampering, shouting, and flourishing their sabres." The French cavalry advanced to meet them at a rapid pace, but suddenly halting, the first rank discharged their carbines, by which four or five of their opponents were brought to the ground. This had so unhappy an effect upon the enthusiasm of the rest, that they immedi-

horse one thousand. He also states the number of pieces of cannon to have been ten.

* The force being in want of money, Capt. Vasserot undertook to convey a supply. Accordingly, on the evening of the 5th, he left the town with ten of his men, each bearing a bag containing a thousand pagodas (a gold coin worth about eight shillings). The little band forced their way through the enemy's guard, and arrived in safety at the English camp, from whence they forthwith threw up rockets as signals of their success.

CHAP. V. ately fled, leaving Major Calliaud with no companions but Capt. Vasserot and the ten troopers. These retreated into an enclosure, and the French pursued the flying cavalry until stopped by a discharge from some field-pieces, and by the fire of a party of sepoys. Some loss was subsequently sustained through the indiscretion of an English officer, in rushing with his troops from a post which he had successfully maintained, to push his advantage by pursuing the enemy. The party were attacked in the rear by cavalry, thrown into confusion, and many of them cut down. The contest was maintained with fluctuating success throughout the day, but in the evening the enemy retired, leaving the English masters of the field. Most welcome to the English was this result, and little were the French aware of the value of the relief which their departure afforded. The English were not far from being reduced to a state when, from want of ammunition, it would have been alike impossible to maintain the fight or to effect a retreat in the face of the enemy. Their remaining stock was only sufficient to furnish six cartridges for each musket, and three balls for each of the field-pieces. In the night Major Calliaud moved his force as silently as possible in the direction of Chingleput, leaving fires to deceive the enemy. With his usual activity, he shortly afterwards made an attempt to surprise the Dutch settlement of Sadrass. Lally, who appears to have thought that the law of nations was without validity in India, had taken forcible possession of this place, and

relieved the Dutch garrison of their duties by transferring them to a French detachment. The design of Major Calliaud was frustrated by the mistake of his guides, in consequence of which he was unable to make his meditated attack, as he had intended, under cover of the night.*

But the time was approaching when the British force, both within and without the walls, were to be relieved from the labour and anxiety attendant on their situation. For nearly two months Lally had been carrying on operations against Madras. His batteries had been opened about half that time, and a breach was made which, he believed, justified an attempt to storm. His officers, to whose judgment he appealed, but with a distinct

* A curious occurrence connected with the occupation of Sadrass by the French is related by Orme. A short time after the commencement of the siege of Madras, some women and children from that settlement were sent in three boats to Sadrass, in the belief that they would be safer in a neutral territory than in a place besieged by a hostile army. Two hours after their departure, intelligence arrived that Sadrass was in the hands of the French; but it was too late to recall the boats,—they proceeded, and those on board were made prisoners. For the boats the French soon found employment. They were forthwith loaded with fifty barrels of gunpowder and some other military stores, and dispatched, under the care of the boatmen who had brought them from Madras, to convey these articles for the supply of the army which was besieging that place, a French soldier being placed in each boat. In the night the three soldiers fell asleep, and the boatmen, having first poured water into their muskets, bound the unconscious and unwatchful sentinels, and brought the boats to the English sea-gate. They were rewarded by a sum equal to the value of the gunpowder and stores thus singularly transferred into the possession of the English.

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expression of his own opinion, took a different view, and though they admitted the breach to be practicable, declared it to be inaccessible. Thus far they only complied with the demand made for their opinion on a particular point; but they proceeded to deliver their judgment upon another, on which Lally had not sought their advice, and probably did not wish to receive it: they declared their conviction, founded on a comparison of forces, that the prosecution of the works to quell the fire of the place would only be to sacrifice many lives without the slightest probability of ultimate success. This view of the prospects of the besieging army was extremely distasteful to Lally, who attributed it to intrigue and a spirit of personal hostility to himself. But whatever the value of the opinion of the French officers, and whatever the motives which had led to its expression, it was an adverse stroke which, falling upon Lally at a time when he was surrounded by a variety of discouraging circumstances, overcame even his self-satisfied and arrogant presumption. He was without money, and without the means of raising any. The pay of the troops was several weeks in arrear; the supply of food was scanty and uncertain; the sepoys deserted in great numbers; some of the European troops threatened to follow their example, while the feelings of the officers towards their commander were almost avowedly those of disaffection and hostility.*

* In a letter addressed to the Governor of Pondicherry on the 14th February, which was intercepted and brought to Major

The arrogant and imperious temper of Lally had indeed surrounded him with enemies, at a time when he needed all the assistance which personal attachment could lend to the claims of public duty; and he saw that to linger before Madras would be but to incur the chance of finding himself universally deserted. He determined therefore to gratify his vengeance by burning the Black Town, and then to withdraw from a scene where he had lost whatever portion of the confidence of his army he had ever possessed. The execution of the former part of this determination was prevented, and that of the latter accelerated, by the opportune arrival, on the 16th of February, of a fleet under Admiral Pocock, with reinforcements for Madras. An impression prevailed in the town that an assault would be made that night before the troops from the ships could be landed, and not only every soldier in the garrison, but every inhabitant capable of service, was under arms; but the expectation was unfounded.

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Calliaud, Lally complains bitterly of want of support. He expresses much indignation at the conduct of a naval commander in refraining from attacking an English ship, and says, "If I were the judge of the point of honour of the Company's officers, I would break him like glass, as well as some others of them." In the same letter he says, "We remain still in the same position; the breach made these fifteen days; all the time within fifteen toises of the walls of the place, and never raising our heads to look at it. I reckon that on our arrival at Pondicherry we shall endeavour to learn some other trade, for this of war requires too much patience." He concludes by saying that he would rather go and command Caffres in Madagascar than remain in a place which the fire of the English must soon destroy, if the fire of heaven did not.

CHAP. V. The enemy kept up a hot fire through the night, and the next day they were in full march towards Arcot. So hurried was their departure, that they left behind fifty-two pieces of cannon (some of them indeed damaged), and a hundred and fifty barrels of gunpowder. They left, also, about forty sick and wounded Europeans who were unable to march, and for whose transport their commanders could make no provision. The unfortunate men, however, received a degree of attention which is creditable both to those who were compelled to abandon them and those into whose hands they fell. The French commander left a letter recommending them to the humanity of the English governor; and the appeal was answered in a manner which drew from Lally an expression of his satisfaction.

After an interval occupied in the necessary preparations, the English took the field, and followed the retreating army to Conjeveram. Lally had given up the command to M. Soupires, and, in consequence of impaired health, retired to Pondicherry. His instructions to M. Soupires were not to invite a battle, but to wait till he was attacked; and they were strictly followed. The English were not less indisposed to attack, and the two armies remained several days* almost in sight of each other, each reluctant to strike the first blow. This state of threatened hostility but positive inaction would have ended in the recall of the British troops into can-

* Orme says twenty-two; but his dates do not appear to bear out the statement.

tonment, had not Colonel Lawrence proceeded to the presidency to remonstrate against such a step. There this distinguished officer abandoned a command which ill health rendered him unfit longer to retain; and the same cause incapacitating Colonel Draper, the chief command devolved upon Major Brereton. This officer, in the hope of bringing the enemy to an engagement, or of inducing the French commander to quit his post at Conjeveram, made a movement upon Wandewash, took possession of the suburbs, and opened ground against the fort. Soupires offered no interruption, but retired to Arcot. Major Brereton thereupon made a forced march upon Conjeveram, which he took by assault. The officers engaged in the attack seem to have contended for pre-eminence in exposure to danger, and they suffered severely. A single discharge killed four and wounded five, Major Calliaud being among the latter. The place was defended by Murzafa Beg, a soldier of fortune, who had withdrawn himself from the British service during the siege of Madras. He had surrendered, and was being led to Major Brereton, when he was met by Mahommed Isoof, who, raising his scymetar, nearly severed the prisoner's head from his body, exclaiming—"These are the terms to be kept with a traitor."*

Lally, on hearing of the departure of Major Brereton for Wandewash, had left Pondicherry with a party of Europeans, and ordered Soupires to join him at Chittapet. But his movements were paralyzed by

* Orme's History, vol. iii. page 472.

CHAP. V. want of funds. He advanced to Coverpauk, where distress and his personal unpopularity gave rise to a state of feeling in his army which rendered it manifestly imprudent to risk a battle. The result A.D. 1759. was, that late in May the French went into cantonments, and the English shortly afterwards followed their example.

It is now necessary to turn to the events which followed the recall of M. Bussy from the court of Salabat Jung. A petty rajah, named Anunderauze, who was dissatisfied with some part of the conduct of that officer, availed himself of his departure to attack Vizagapatam, of which he succeeded in dispossessing the French garrison. He immediately sent advice of his success to the presidency of Madras, accompanied by an offer to surrender his conquest to the English, and by a request for the aid of a large detachment to act with his own troops in the provinces which the French had obtained from the Soubahdar of the Deccan. But the council of Madras were not in a condition to afford any assistance. Fort St. David had fallen, and an attack on the seat of the presidency was expected. Disappointed in this quarter, Anunderauze turned to Bengal, where, but for the predominant influence of Clive, his application would have been attended with no better success than at Madras. Contrary to the opinion of his coadjutors in council, Clive determined to give the required aid; and an expedition was dispatched under Colonel Forde, consisting of five hundred Europeans,

two thousand one hundred native troops, six field-pieces, twenty-four six-pounders for battery, a howitzer, and an eight-inch mortar. The expedition proceeded by sea, and having disembarked at Vizagapatam, joined the army of Anunderauze, which lay at a short distance from that place. But the progress of the allies was impeded by disputes. The rajah expressed great satisfaction at the arrival of the English force, but manifested a strong disinclination to contribute any thing to its support. Affairs were at length adjusted through the interposition of Mr. Andrews, a civil servant of the East-India Company, who had arrived to re-establish the factory of Vizagapatam, of which he had formerly been the chief, and from that circumstance was personally known to Anunderauze. Through his mediation a treaty was concluded, by which it was stipulated that all plunder should be equally divided; that all the countries that might be conquered should be delivered to the Rajah, who was to collect the revenues, with the exception of the sea-ports and towns at the mouths of the rivers, which, with the revenues of the districts annexed to them, were to belong to the Company; and that no treaty for the disposal or restitution of the possessions of either party should be made without the consent of both. Finally, the prime difficulty in the way of action was removed by a stipulation that the Rajah should supply fifty thousand rupees a month for the expenses of the army, and six thousand for the private expenses of the officers.

CHAP. V. The united forces now marched against M. Conflans, who had been left in command of a portion of the French force which had not accompanied M. Bussy; and they moved to victory. At Peddapore a battle took place, in which the French, being totally defeated, abandoned their camp to the victors, with many pieces of cannon, a large quantity of ammunition, and a thousand draught bullocks. The honour of the victory belonged exclusively to the English force. The Rajah's army consisted of five hundred horse, whose value Orme determines by the passing remark, that they were "incapable of fighting;"* and about five thousand foot, some of whom were armed with fire-arms of extraordinary fabrication, and the remainder with pikes and bows.† Horse and foot are alike included by the historian just quoted, under the term of "rabble;"‡ and Colonel Forde seems to have been anxious for nothing so much as to get them out of the way. The only useful part of the Rajah's force was a body of about forty Europeans, whom he had collected to manage a few field-pieces, and who performed the duty very satisfactorily.

The retreat of the French was conducted upon the principle of each man providing for himself. The flying troops took various routes, but most of them towards Rajahmundry. To this place the French commander, M. Conflans, bent his way; and if he had gained little reputation as a soldier, he

* History, vol. ii. page 382. † Orme, vol. ii. page 377.
‡ History, vol. ii. page 378.

seemed resolved at least to challenge the distinction of being a bold and rapid rider. No instances are recorded of his care to preserve the remnant of his army; but it is related that he traversed the whole distance from the field of battle to Rajahmundry (which is about forty miles), at full gallop, and by obtaining changes of horses, performed the journey in an incredibly short space of time.

Rajahmundry possessed a fort, but it was almost incapable of defence; besides which the French had lost nearly all their cannon. Under these circumstances, it was deemed imprudent to linger at that place, and the fugitives, with all possible speed, crossed the Godavery, on the bank of which river the town stands. Colonel Forde advanced to Rajahmundry, and waited some time for the Rajah, who had engaged to make the first payment under the treaty as soon as he was in possession of the fort. The Rajah, however, did not arrive to seize the prize, and Colonel Forde, with his forces, crossed the Godavery in pursuit of the flying enemy. But his progress was soon stopped by the want of money. He had brought with him a supply from Bengal, but on the faith of the Rajah's promises, he had lent that prince twenty thousand rupees, and the loan, with the current expenses of the army, had now left the British commander without the means of proceeding. He consequently recrossed the river, to the great dismay of the Rajah, who imagined that the retrograde movement was made for the purpose of inflicting punishment on him, and in this belief fled to the

CHAP. V. hills. The interposition of Mr. Andrews was again resorted to, but the Rajah's fear of Colonel Forde, and his reluctance to part with any money, seemed to have entirely divested him of all interest in the success of the expedition. With some difficulty a reconstruction of the treaty was effected, and it was stipulated that whatever sums the Rajah might advance should be considered as loans, and that the revenues of the countries which might be reduced on the further side of the Godavery, excepting such as belonged to the French either by occupation or grant, should be equally divided between the Rajah and the English. The Rajah then furnished a small amount in money and a larger in bills, which enabled the British force to resume its march in the direction which had been taken by M. Conflans. That officer had recovered so much presence of mind as to collect part of his scattered troops at Masulipatam, where he seemed resolved to make a stand. He had made application for assistance to Salabat Jung, and that prince advanced with a body of troops from Hyderabad: his brother, marching with another, joined him near the Kistna. But the English commander, undismayed by these threatening appearances, steadily continued his march, though greatly embarrassed and delayed by the erratic excursions of his native ally in search of plunder. On
A.D. 1759. the 6th March he was in sight of Masulipatam, and on the same day he received the cheering intelligence that Lally had been obliged to raise the siege of Madras. Yet his situation was surrounded

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by difficulties. He had begun to construct batteries, and to make preparations for attacking the fort, but his hopes appeared in imminent danger of being frustrated from the exhaustion of his resources. His military chest was empty, and the Rajah refused any further supply. Colonel Forde had borrowed of his officers all the money that they possessed, and even used the prize-money of the troops. Some treasure had arrived at Vizagapatam from Bengal, but the interposition of part of the French force rendered its transmission to Colonel Forde impracticable, and it was sent for safety to the Dutch settlement of Cockanarah. While labouring under these embarrassments, the whole of Colonel Forde's European troops suddenly turned out with their arms, and threatened to march away. With some difficulty they were persuaded to return to their tents and appoint a deputation to represent their demands. These extended to an immediate payment of the prize-money then due to them, and to a promise of the whole booty of Masulipatam in case it should be taken; and on any other terms it was declared the refractory troops would not serve in the siege. Colonel Forde, unable to comply with the first part of this demand, was compelled to try the effect of a promise to pay, out of the first money which should come into his hands, the prize-money then due. With regard to the second part of the claim, he represented that, as by the Company's regulations the troops were only entitled to one-half of what is taken, he could not, on his

CHAP. V. own authority, engage that they should receive more; but he promised to represent their case to the Company at home, and to retain the amount in dispute until the question was determined.* The hasty resolves of excited men have rarely much stability, and these assurances induced the disaffected troops to return to their duty.

But one difficulty was no sooner removed than another started up. Salabat Jung, who was only about forty miles from Masulipatam, sent to Anunderauze, commanding him to quit the English, and repair to the standard of his lawful master. At the same time, intelligence arrived that Rajahmundry had again fallen into the hands of the French. These events so alarmed the Rajah, that he determined without delay to endeavour to regain his own country on the opposite side of the Godavery. Of this intention he gave no notice to A. D. 1759. Colonel Forde, but on the night of the 27th March he suddenly decamped, and though not usually remarkable for the rapidity of his motions, he on this occasion marched sixteen miles before break of day. Colonel Forde, as soon as he became aware

* By letters patent from the crown, dated the 14th January, 1758, the East-India Company were entitled to all booty and plunder taken solely by their forces or ships. When the land or sea forces of the crown might be engaged conjointly with those of the Company, the right of the sovereign to distribute was reserved. It has long been the practice of the Company to give to the captors the whole booty where it was at their disposal, and where this was not the case such part of it as might be awarded to the Company by the crown.

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of the Rajah's flight, dispatched messengers to endeavour to win him back; and by giving his fears a different direction to that which they had at first taken, they succeeded. They pointed out the danger to which the retreat of Anunderauze was exposed from the cavalry of Salabat Jung on the one hand, and the French troops in the neighbourhood of Rajahmundry on the other; and the vacillating Rajah once more rejoined his English ally. To divert Salabat Jung, an attempt was made to open a negotiation, and a civil servant of the Company proceeded to his camp to represent the views of the English, which were stated to be confined to the acquisition of the French ports and factories on the coast, and not to extend to any part of the authority which that nation or its representatives had exercised in the interior. This exposition of the designs of the English was not ill calculated to conciliate the servants and retainers of Salabat Jung, who had entertained great jealousy of the power and influence attained by Bussy.

In the meantime the batteries of the English kept up a hot fire, and on the 6th April the works were so much damaged as to be deemed accessible in three places. On that day the artillery officers reported that only two days' ammunition for the batteries remained in store: intelligence was also received that Salabat Jung was advancing, and that the French force which had been hovering about Rajahmundry, and which he had invited to form a junction with his army, was not far distant. It was now necessary to make a prompt decision, — A.D. 1759.

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and notwithstanding great difficulties that presented themselves, Colonel Forde determined to make an attempt to carry the fort by storm. A heavy rain had greatly increased the labour of crossing the intervening ground, but this circumstance was regarded by Colonel Forde as rather an advantage, because it would tend to lull the suspicions of the garrison. He accordingly ordered the firing to be kept up vigorously through the next day, and all the troops to be under arms at ten at night.

One part of the ground surrounding the fort was a swamp of mud through which the ditch had not been continued, partly on account of the labour and expense of carrying it on, and partly because, from the nature of the ground, it was believed to be more difficult to pass than the ditch itself. It was reported, however, that the natives occasionally waded through the morass, and on examination it was found to be passable, though not without extreme difficulty. It was resolved accordingly to distract the enemy's attention by a movement on this point, while the main attack was made on another, and the Rajah's troops were making a demonstration on a third.

The force allotted to the main attack proceeded in three divisions. Two of these were composed of European troops, and were led respectively by Captain Fischer* and Captain Yorke. The third, com-

* The first division was to have been led by Captain Callender, but Orme says that when the troops were ready to move Captain Callender was not to be found. Some time after the British

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posed of sepoys, was led by Captain Maclean. The first division was discovered in passing the ditch, and while tearing up a palisade which obstructed their progress, were exposed to a heavy fire of cannon and musketry. They gained the breach, however, and obtained possession of one of the bastions called the Cameleon. Here they were joined by the second division under Captain Yorke. This officer perceiving a line of the enemy's sepoys moving along the way below the rampart, ran down, and seizing the French officer who commanded them, called upon him to order his men to lay down their arms and surrender. The demand was obeyed with little apparent reluctance. Captain Yorke now pursued his way, displaying the highest gallantry as well as the greatest generosity and clemency towards the enemy. But his men shewed some disposition to falter, and at last taking fright at what they erroneously believed to be a mine, they all ran back. Their officers followed to reclaim them, and Captain Yorke was left alone with two drummers. Returning to the bastion, he found that some of the men were proposing to go out of the breach and quit the fort; but Captain Yorke threatened instant death to the first who should make the attempt, and shame beginning to operate, a cry was raised that their commander was ill-used, and about thirty-six declared they would follow wherever he would lead.

force had got into the fort, Captain Callender suddenly appeared, "no one," says Orme, "knew from whence." He took the command of his division, but was almost immediately shot dead.

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With these he returned, leaving the remainder to follow as soon as their officers should be able to bring them on. The interval, however, had allowed time for the French to load a gun with grape-shot and point it in the direction in which the English party were advancing. It was fired when they were within a few yards of it, and the discharge did fearful execution. Some were killed, and sixteen, among which number was the gallant officer who led the party, were wounded. Captain Fischer in the meantime was advancing along the rampart with his division of Europeans, and the sepoys, under Captain Maclean, were gaining entrance at a place called the South Gate, which was in imperfect repair. The two false attacks were also answering the purposes intended, although the Rajah's troops were utterly unfit for any real service, and the force under Captain Knox, finding the enemy prepared, did not attempt to cross the swamp, but only fired over it. Both, however, contributed to divert the attention of the enemy and increase the alarm of M. Conflans, who is represented as having remained at his house issuing orders founded on reports brought to him there, which the arrival of the next report induced him to contradict. He at last resolved to make an offer of surrender on honourable terms. The answer of Colonel Forde was, that the surrender must be at discretion, and further, that it must be immediate. M. Conflans neither objected nor hesitated, but gave instant orders to discontinue further resistance.

The fall of Masulipatam was unexpected, and the success of the English was, without doubt, owing to the daring spirit in which the attempt had been conceived and executed. The prisoners exceeded the number of those to whose arms they surrendered. The fort was abundantly provided with stores, and defended by one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon. These, with a rich booty, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

The consequences of this success were immediately apparent. Salabat Jung was within fifteen miles of Masulipatam, but its fall induced him to manifest a disposition to treat; and Colonel Forde proceeded to his camp, where he was received with marked attention. A treaty was concluded, consisting of four articles. By the first, the whole territory dependant on Masulipatam, as well as certain other districts, were granted to the English, without the reservation of fine or military service. By the second, Salabat Jung engaged that the French force, which still remained in his country, should pass the Kistna within fifteen days; that, in future, the French should have no settlement south of that river; that he would thenceforward retain no French troops in his service, and that he would neither render assistance to that nation, nor receive any from it. The third article gave impunity to Anunderauze for the tribute which he had levied in the French possessions, and exonerated him from the payment of his own for one year—his future liability to make the accustomed payments being recog-

CHAP. V. nized, as well as the power of the Soubahdar to enforce them, provided he neither assisted nor gave protection to the enemies of the English. The fourth article restricted the English from aiding or protecting the enemies of Salabat Jung. This treaty gave to the English a territory extending about eighty miles along the coast and twenty inland. The provisions were altogether in favour of the English, and it is not probable that Salabat Jung would have granted so much had he not been under the influence of alarm from another source, in addition to the terror inspired by the capture of Masulipatam. His brother, Nizam Ali, was on terms of enmity with Bussy, whose dewan he had caused to be murdered. Clive, calculating on the influence of this prince's ill-feeling towards the French, had written to him requesting his assistance in support of Col. Forde's expedition. The precise effect of this communication cannot be ascertained, for Nizam Ali was quite ready, without any stimulus, to undertake any project that promised to gratify his ambition or promote his interest; but whatever might be the force of the various motives prompting him to action, Nizam Ali no sooner learned that Salabat Jung was marching against the English, than he took the field and advanced to Hyderabad, for the purpose, as he alleged, of regulating the affairs of the state—in other words, of supplanting his brother and taking possession of his throne. Salabat Jung had hoped to secure the assistance of part of the English force in resisting this attempt against his authority, and he

sought to prevail on Colonel Forde to grant it by the lure of personal advantages. But the English commander refused, and the result was that the Soubahdar, on marching to the defence of his capital, took with him that French force which by an express article of the treaty he had undertaken to expel. His return dispelled the danger by which he was menaced. Negotiation was commenced between the brothers, and Nizam Ali withdrew; but not without being restored to the government of Berar, from which he had been removed by the management of Bussy. This arrangement gave offence to Basalat Jung, another brother of Salabat Jung, who forthwith departed to promote his own views in the south, accompanied by the French corps which the Soubahdar, after engaging to expel, had brought to Hyderabad. This movement, and a report which obtained belief that a body of French troops had moved from Arcot, led to the dispatch from Conjeveram of an English force under Major Monson. They marched on the 5th of July, and A.D. 1759. on the 17th appeared before Coverpauk, which was summoned to surrender, though with very slight expectation that the demand would have any effect. Greatly was the English commander surprised by receiving an answer, offering to surrender the place provided the garrison were permitted to retire to Arcot, the soldiers with their knapsacks and the officers with all their effects. The offer was accepted, and the English thus easily gained possession of a place which was in a condition to have put

CHAP. V. them to the expense of a siege; the time occupied from the summons to the surrender being only about an hour. This facile triumph encouraged Major Monson to proceed to Arcot, in the hope of finding the garrison under the influence of a similar spirit to that which prevailed at Coverpauk; but in this he was disappointed. A determination was manifested to maintain the place, and the garrison was so much superior to their opponents in artillery, that until a train could be obtained from Madras, the place could not be assailed with any prospect of success. Before this could arrive, the far greater part of the French army might reach Arcot from their cantonments, and Major Monson consequently marched back to Conjeveram, leaving a garrison in Coverpauk.

A. D. 1759. In April, Admiral Pocock returned with his fleet from Bombay, to which place he had proceeded in the month of October of the preceding year, in order to avoid the north-east monsoon. A French fleet was expected from the islands, and the British admiral, in the hope of meeting it, continued to the windward of Pondicherry, and chiefly at Negapatam. Requiring a supply of water, which the Dutch authorities of the latter place refused to furnish, the admiral sailed for Trincomalee, in Ceylon, having a few days previously dispatched the *Revenge* frigate in the same direction to look out for the enemy. At ten in the morning on the 2nd of September some ships were discovered to the south-east, and soon afterwards the *Revenge* appeared

chased by one of the strange vessels. The English squadron immediately weighed, but was unable to get within cannon-shot of the enemy before dark; and from various circumstances arising from winds, currents, and the weather, the fleets were kept asunder until the 10th.

The French fleet was that of M. d'Aché considerably reinforced. It now consisted of eleven sail of the line and three frigates. The crews amounted to five thousand five hundred men, and the greatest exertions had been made to victual and prepare the fleet for sea. The labour had occupied many months, and provisions had been drawn not only from the French islands, but from Madagascar and other places. So great was the anxiety felt on this account, that a fleet had been dispatched to procure provisions from the Cape of Good Hope, where a great quantity were purchased at a vast expense. A part of this outlay had, however, been reimbursed by the capture of an English Company's ship homeward bound from Madras.

The English squadron consisted of nine ships of the line, two Company's ships, and a fire-ship. The difference between the two fleets in number of guns and men was very considerable.* The action commenced soon after two o'clock in the afternoon,

* Orme says the French had the advantage by one hundred and twenty-six guns; Cambridge gives them a superiority of one hundred and ninety-two guns, and he adds that their advantage in number of men was two thousand three hundred and sixty-five.

CHAP. V. and continued for about two hours, when the enemy's rear, and shortly after their centre, began to give way. Their van then made sail, and with the entire squadron bore away. They were pursued, but soon escaped beyond the reach of cannon-shot. The loss of men was supposed to be nearly equal on both sides, but the English, though the victors, appear to have sustained more damage in their ships than the enemy. None of the English ships after the engagement could set half their sails; all the French ships except one carried their topsails. This, like some other naval engagements about this time, was attended by no decisive results. The fleets met, exchanged some broadsides, and then separated, each having sustained more or less of damage. In this instance the chief effect of the vast preparation made by the French was to inflict some degree of injury on the rigging of a few English ships. On the other hand, the French ran, and the English therefore must claim the victory; but it produced nothing.

The English fleet returned to Negapatam, and the French, five days after the engagement, arrived at Pondicherry. Here they landed one hundred and eighty troops, and a small amount of treasure in money and diamonds, the latter having been taken in the English ship captured on the voyage to the Cape of Good Hope. D'Aché, with that yearning for the islands which he never failed to experience when at Pondicherry, declared his intention immediately to return; a determination con-

firmed, if not caused, by intelligence of the approach of a reinforcement to the English fleet. Accordingly, on the 19th September the signal was made for weighing, and the ships loosed their topsails. These preparations excited a perfect storm of indignation in the settlement. The military authorities and principal inhabitants assembled at the house of the governor, and unanimously passed a resolution, declaring that the precipitate defection of the squadron could not fail to produce the most dangerous consequences to the state, as holding out to all the country powers a shameful acknowledgment that the French had been defeated in the last engagement and could not sustain another, and that they utterly despaired of success on shore. Founded on this resolution a protest was immediately drawn, declaring M. d'Aché responsible for the loss of the settlement, and avowing a determination to appeal to the King for the infliction of such punishment as his conduct deserved. So great had been the speed of M. d'Aché, that it was only by accident that he became acquainted with this formal expression of the indignation of his countrymen. He was several leagues out at sea, as were all his ships but one, which had been detained from some cause after the others were under sail. To the commander of this vessel the protest was entrusted, with a charge for its immediate delivery to M. d'Aché. He was also furnished with a number of copies, one of which was to be given to every commander in the squadron. For

CHAP. V. the opinion of either the authorities or the inhabitants of Pondicherry d'Aché entertained little respect, when yielding to it was likely to place him in a position of danger; but the threats of denouncing his conduct to the government at home made him pause. If there were danger in returning, there was also danger, though more remote, in flight. D'Aché called a council of his captains, after which he returned to Pondicherry, and went on shore to confer with Lally. Before their deliberations were concluded the English fleet appeared standing into the road in line of battle. The state of the wind gave the French the opportunity to bear down and engage if they chose, while it deprived the English admiral of this power. The French made their usual choice, and disposed their ships in such a manner as to place them beyond the reach of the English, who kept their line throughout an entire day without exciting any other feeling in the enemy but that of satisfaction at being out of danger. D'Aché yielded little to the remonstrances which assailed him on shore. He peremptorily adhered to his determination of returning to the islands, and all that could be wrung from him was a reluctant consent to leave behind four hundred Africans who were on board his fleet, and five hundred European sailors and marines, which latter body were courteously denominated by Lally, "the scum of the sea."

The day of M. d'Aché's departure brought intelligence which in some degree relieved the gloom

which hung over Pondicherry. The British government had meditated an attack on Wandewash, the most important of the enemy's stations between Pondicherry and Madras. Subsequently they appear to have been desirous of postponing this operation, but Major Brereton being most anxious to undertake it, they yielded. The garrison of Trivatore surrendered to this force on the first summons, and on the 28th of September the English army encamped under a ledge of rocks which extended about three miles north-west of the fort of Wandewash. The native governor had declined to admit into the fort any European troops except a few gunners, and the French consequently took up their quarters in the town. There, on the night succeeding the 29th, Major Brereton determined to attack them. The troops by whom the attack was to be made were formed into three divisions: the first, which was led by Major Monson, succeeded in obtaining entrance, and made their way with little loss to a place where it was understood the main body of the French troops were lying; but here they were surprised by finding no enemy, and embarrassed by not meeting with the second division of the English force, which was under the command of Major Robert Gordon. A rocket was to be the signal for the advance of this division to the place to which Major Monson had penetrated, and it was given as soon as they had arrived; but Major Gordon appears to have lost all presence of mind, and after it had been determined to advance, and

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CHAP. V. the party selected to lead the attack had actually gone forward, the commander of the division had disappeared. The second officer in rank, Captain Preston, was a man of unquestionable courage; but he, being ignorant of the reason of Major Gordon's absence, would not venture to take his place. The consequence was, that the advanced party being left unsupported, were exposed to a galling fire of musketry from the rampart, which, from their situation, they could return only at great disadvantage. This party, which was led by Lieutenant De la Douespe, gallantly stood their ground, expecting to be immediately joined by the main body, but in vain; all the support they received was from two field-pieces, which opened a fire on the rampart. Major Gordon did not appear; the African troops in his division soon took to flight; and the Europeans, disheartened by not being led on, and exposed to a fire which they could not effectually return, likewise fled. Still Lieutenant De la Douespe and his brave party kept their ground—where they would probably all have perished, had not Captain Preston ran forward and brought them back to the place where the officers of the division were assembled, deserted by all excepting the artillerymen, who still stood by their commandant, Captain Barker, and vigorously plied their guns. The fugitives made their way to the third division, which was the reserve, and was posted on a ridge in the rear. It was commanded by Major Brereton, who, on the first notice of the approach of the fugitives, rushed to

wards them unaccompanied, and under a strong impulse of indignation ran the first man he met through the body.* Major Brereton then pushed on to the two guns, which Captain Barker and his men were still working; and there being no longer any object to be gained by their perseverance, they were withdrawn to the reserve.

Major Monson, ignorant of the position either of the enemy or of those from whom he expected assistance, had resolved to wait for the day. It broke, and brought upon him the point-blank fire of fourteen of the enemy's guns from the tower and esplanade. This he could only return with the fire of two field-pieces and discharges of musketry. Such a disparity could not long be maintained; but, unwilling to relinquish the hope of support, Major Monson sought the means of protracting the contest as long as possible. Various methods of sheltering the men from the enemy's fire were tried; but the enemy, after a time, moving part of their guns, so as to attack the division in flank as well as in front, the field-pieces of the English being disabled, and the men beginning to lose courage, a retreat became advisable, if not inevitable. A singular illustration of the instinct of discipline

* Orme, who records the circumstance, says of the man thus slain:—"Unfortunately, he was one of the bravest in the army, so that the example carried little influence." There is something strange in the remark; and it is to be presumed, that the fact of this man having been foremost in flight, is not to be taken as evidence of his having been "one of the bravest men in the army."

CHAP. V. marked this movement. The grenadiers of one of the Company's battalions were to halt near the gate, but seeing it open they marched out into the plain, quickening their pace at every step. Sensible that to call after men in such a state of feeling would only have the effect of adding to their fear and driving them into wild and disorderly flight, Major Calliaud followed and passed them—when, stopping suddenly in front, he cried "Halt." The men obeyed the word of command, formed according to order, turned, and followed the officer who had thus recalled them to duty. The retreat was subsequently conducted in good order.

On the news of this affair reaching Pondicherry, Lally fired a hundred guns in honour of the great victory achieved by the French, and transmitted magnificent accounts of it to every quarter where it was likely to advance his interests.

Major Brereton has been severely blamed for this attempt, and it has been attributed to a desire for gaining distinction before the arrival of another officer * who was about to supersede him; but the sentence appears more harsh than just. He was ignorant, indeed, of the precise strength of the enemy, which was greater than he had supposed by about four hundred men. But it was not the numbers of the enemy that disappointed the English of success, and had Major Gordon performed his duty, the result might have been different. Some merit has been claimed for the government of Madras for

* Colonel Coote.

having shewn reluctance to sanction the attack, after having previously approved of it. But this change of opinion appears to have been caused by an apprehension that d'Aché had brought to Pondicherry some considerable number of troops, which might be employed in adding to the strength of the French at Wandewash. No troops had, however, been sent from Pondicherry to Wandewash, though some were about to be dispatched, and it was one object of Major Brereton to strike a blow before they could arrive. Some addition had been made to the French force from the adjacent garrisons, but the force under the command of Major Brereton considerably exceeded that of the enemy.*

Bussy arrived at Wandewash the day after the English had left their encampment before that place. He was proceeding with a detachment to join Basalat Jung. He marched to Trivatore, which surrendered to him as easily as, but a short time before, it had yielded to the English. Thence he advanced to Arcot, from which place he had made one day's march when his progress was stopped by the arrival of unwelcome intelligence from Wandewash. The pecuniary distress of the French had long been extreme. But little money had lately

* Major Brereton had fifteen hundred European infantry and one hundred cavalry, two thousand five hundred sepoys, seven hundred native horse, and about eighty Africans. He believed the French to have six hundred European infantry and three hundred cavalry, but in addition to those numbers they had been reinforced by about four hundred men, making a total of thirteen hundred Europeans. The strength of their native force is nowhere accurately stated.

CHAP. V. been issued to the troops, and that in place of provisions, which were not supplied with any regularity. More than a year's pay was due to the whole army. Discontent of no ordinary kind was the consequence, and the feeling was aggravated by the soldiers having generally taken up the belief that a great amount of treasure had been brought by the squadron, and that Lally had amassed and secreted much wealth. The success at Wandewash seemed to add strength to the sense of grievance previously existing, and the soldiers complained openly and loudly. Their complaints were uttered with impunity; but some men of Loraine's regiment having been subjected to punishment for other military offences, the whole regiment turned out and marched from the camp to the spot which the English had lately occupied. The officers of other regiments hearing the drums, turned out also, supposing that the camp was attacked, and this led to an apprehension on the part of the mutineers that they were about to be surrounded. To ascertain the fact, a deputation was dispatched, the chief of the party being the foremost man in the mutiny. His exhortations impressed those to whom he was sent with the same spirit which already pervaded those by whom he was deputed, and they forthwith determined to imitate the example of their comrades. The officers expostulated, but in vain; they were peremptorily commanded to retire. Arrangements were now made for supplying the necessities of the mutinous force. Parties were

deputed to bring up the field-artillery, the tumbrils, oxen, tents, and baggage; and even the market people, to the number of about two thousand, with a multitude of animals, were pressed into the service. When all was prepared, the mutineers proceeded to the spot which they had selected for the encampment, where their first step was to elect a serjeant-major their commander-in-chief. This functionary nominated another serjeant his major-general, and appointed the usual officers to the various companies. The general issued his orders, which were read to the men in the ordinary way, and every detail of duty and discipline was observed with the greatest regularity.

The intelligence of this movement was communicated with all possible speed to Pondicherry. To allay the feeling which had led to it, Lally produced from his own chest a considerable sum, the members of the council sent their plate to the Mint, and some of the principal inhabitants followed their example. The Viscount Fumel was dispatched to negotiate with the mutineers; and having succeeded in making some impression on the majority, he left them to deliberate, giving them three hours for the transmission of an answer. The influence of their serjeant-general was exerted in favour of compromise; and they resolved to return to their duty, on condition of receiving a general amnesty, six months' pay immediately, and the remainder in a month. This was agreed to; a pardon and six months' pay were forwarded, and the troops marched back to Wandewash. The news of the discontent had ex-

CHAP. V. tended to the force under Bussy, and its spirit was rapidly caught. To appease it, he was obliged at once to advance a month's pay to his men, and then to wait until a supply could be obtained, to place them on a level with the troops at Wandewash.

The growing necessities of the French, and the fearful intimation which they had received, that their troops would not serve without pay, forced them to the consideration of the means of recruiting their exhausted treasury. In the rich and fertile island of Seringham, the approaching December harvest promised to be unusually abundant, and the Government share was estimated to be worth six hundred thousand rupees.* This, in the existing situation of the French, was a tempting prize; and it was resolved to make an effort to secure it. The expedition for this purpose was entrusted to M. Crillon, and consisted of nine hundred Europeans, one thousand sepoys, and two hundred native horse. Neither the presidency, nor the commanding officer at Trichinopoly, appear to have been aware of this movement till it was too late to offer an effectual resistance. The approach of the force was only learned from the accidental discovery of an advanced party. A detachment, which was thereupon dispatched from Trichinopoly, gained some advantage, and from the prisoners taken in this affair the first accurate information of the strength and object of the enemy was obtained. A. D. 1759. On the 20th of November, Crillon's force crossed into the island of Seringham, and

* Orme, vol. ii. page 538.

encamped opposite the west face of the pagoda, within which were stationed three hundred sepoys, five hundred irregular troops armed with lances, and two field-pieces. An attempt was made to defend the gateway by erecting a wall across it with a single opening, in front of which was a trench, and behind a parapet for the field-pieces. The French, however, advancing their heaviest cannon, soon beat down the wall and disabled their field-pieces: they then effected an entrance, though gallantly resisted by the sepoys. Their victory was tarnished by a wantonness of cruelty disgraceful to a nation boasting of any degree of civilization. They not only refused quarter after resistance had ceased, but, having turned out all who survived the massacre, fired upon some who were departing, while their cavalry rode after others and cut them down. It is said that these acts were perpetrated by the common men without the sanction of their officers—a very insufficient excuse. If the officers disapproved of the conduct of their men, they ought to have restrained it.

The loss of Seringham was in some degree counterbalanced by success in another quarter. The British force in the Carnatic had been considerably strengthened, partly by exchanges of prisoners, and partly by the arrival from England of two hundred recruits, and a King's regiment containing its full complement of one thousand men, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Coote, who had formerly served in Bengal. He was now nominated

CHAP. V. to the command there; but the appointment was qualified by permission for him to remain with his regiment on the coast of Coromandel, if circumstances should render it more desirable. The amount of British force at this time in India was quite disproportioned to the demand for their services; and it followed that everywhere the various authorities endeavoured to secure as large a part of it as possible for their own protection. Thus Clive retained the troops which he took with him to Bengal, though aware that Madras was threatened with a siege. He knew the danger of the latter presidency; he also knew the hazard of diminishing his strength in Bengal; and being naturally most anxious for the safety of those interests for which he was peculiarly responsible, he was unwilling to place any part of his force in a position from which he could not recall them in case of necessity. The state of affairs in the Carnatic was now thought to warrant the exercise of the option of detaining Colonel Coote and his regiment. Clive, however, had requested that, if Colonel Coote were detained, Major Calliaud might be spared for Bengal; and that officer, with two hundred men, was accordingly dispatched thither.

When the presidency of Madras became aware of the movement of the expedition under M. Crillon, they determined that the whole of the British army should take the field. No plan of operations appears to have been decided on, the choice being left to Colonel Coote, who, about the time the French obtained possession of Seringham, arrived at Con-

jeveram, where the largest division of the army was in cantonment. The troops which had landed with Colonel Coote subsequently joined, and the best mode of employing the force thus collected was deemed to be in attempting to reduce Wandewash. To divert the enemy Colonel Coote, with the main body of his army, marched to Arcot; while Major Brereton, with a strong detachment, after traversing the intermediate territory, marched on to Wandewash, and took possession of the town almost without resistance. Intelligence of this success being forwarded to Colonel Coote at Arcot, he made a forced march to join Major Brereton, who in the meantime had been preparing a battery for the reduction of the fort. Another was subsequently constructed, and both were opened on the 29th of November. The enemy had continued to fire from the walls day and night from the time of the arrival of Major Brereton, but with so little effect that only one man in the British force had been wounded, and he but slightly. The fire of the English batteries, which was directed against the tower of the fort, succeeded, before noon on the day on which it was commenced, in silencing the enemy in that quarter and in making a practicable breach. The fort was then summoned to surrender, but the answer was, that it would be defended to the last extremity. The fire of the English was thereupon continued, and various parts of the defences were in succession dismantled. On the following morning the killadar sent officers to treat for his security

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in the event of his delivering up the place to the English. In the conference that ensued, Colonel Coote pledged himself to continue the killadar in the fort, and in the occupation of the surrounding districts, as a dependent of the Company, if he would deliver up the French whom he had admitted; but the promise was given on the condition of an unequivocal answer being returned by two o'clock in the afternoon. The appointed hour arrived without bringing the expected answer; but shortly afterwards the French soldiers, who seem to have reposed no great confidence in their Mahometan coadjutor, appeared on the walls and offered to deliver up the fort. Colonel Coote immediately ordered a company of sepoys to advance and take possession of the gateway; but having got there, they were told that the key was with the killadar. Against any check in this quarter, however, Colonel Coote had prepared. At the time of sending the sepoys to the gateway, he had himself advanced with another company to the breach, which was passed without opposition. They were followed by others, no resistance being offered; and thus Wandewash fell into the hands of the English without the loss of a single man, and at the expense of only five wounded. The killadar had signed the agreement for surrender to the English before they entered; and it is discreditable to the British authorities that he was not admitted to the advantages which had been promised him. It is true, that the time fixed for receiving his answer had been in a trifling degree exceeded;

but something should have been allowed for the loose and dilatory character of Oriental diplomacy, and his evident intention of complying with the demand made on the part of the English ought to have secured to him the stipulated consideration. It was his misfortune to be a man of great influence in the province, to be related to the family of Chunda Sahib, to have been long connected with the French, and to bear no good will to Mahomet Ali. That prince declared that the capture of the killadar was of more importance than the reduction of the fort; and the circumstances which rendered him dangerous "weighed unjustly," says Orme, "more than the respect due to a contract of which he was fulfilling his part."* Well has it been for the permanent power of the British nation in India, no less than for their reputation, that its servants have rarely acted upon the principles which governed their conduct in this instance.

From Wandewash Colonel Coote marched to Carangoly, distant from the former place about thirty-five miles. He entered the town with little difficulty on the 4th December, erected batteries and cannonaded the fort until the 10th, when his ammunition being nearly expended, he was under the necessity of sending for more to Chingleput;

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* History, vol. ii. page 543.—Notwithstanding the importance attached by Mahomet Ali to the possession of the officer's person, he offered to release him for ten lacs of rupees; but the killadar had an Oriental regard for his money, and added to his offences by refusing to tell where his treasures (which he had removed) were deposited.

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but before he was compelled entirely to suspend his fire, an offer of surrender on terms was unexpectedly made, and the situation of the British force induced their commander to grant almost every thing that was asked. The European part of the garrison, consisting of one hundred men, were permitted to march away with their arms, two rounds of ammunition per man, six days' provisions, drums beating and colours flying. The sepoys also were set free, but without their arms. While due allowance must be made for the circumstances under which these terms were granted, it may be doubted whether they were sufficient to justify such an extent of concession; and as the batteries had, two days before the surrender, made a breach deemed practicable,* it is not easy to account for its having been granted.

The fall of Carangoly was to have been followed by an attack upon the fort of Arcot. While Colonel Coote was on his march to Wandewash, Captain Wood, with a small force, had entered the city of Arcot, and without any opposition taken possession of the Nabob's palace and the adjacent streets, although not half a mile from the fort. Here they remained several days, and compelled the French renter to furnish them with a quantity of rice at the market price. Anticipating the early arrival of

* Orme represents the breach as having been practicable on the 7th December; Cambridge gives the 8th as the date of its having been made. He observes, that there was a ditch to pass; but it is certain that this is not usually considered an insuperable impediment to the capture of fortified places.

Colonel Coote, they were engaged in making preparations for an attack upon the fort, when the approach of M. Bussy, returning from his march to join Basalat Jung, warned them to retire. This movement of Bussy had produced nothing worth the labour and expense of making it. Alarmed by the approach of an English force under Captain More to watch his motions, and instigated by the advice of an influential native who was hostile alike to the two European powers, Basalat Jung not only demanded a complete recognition of his authority and the assistance of the French to maintain it, but added to these conditions of obtaining his friendship another, which, under the circumstances existing, was one of the most inconvenient that could be devised. He required that Bussy should lend him four lacs of rupees; and as the French authorities were, at that moment, in the situation of men who knew not where to turn for the means of defraying charges which could not be diminished or evaded without certain ruin, it was obvious that this condition, if insisted on, must be sufficient to put an end to the negotiation. Bussy tried the effect of personal conference with Basalat Jung, but in vain, and he retired without gaining any thing for the French cause but the barren form of a sunnud, enjoining all chiefs and officers in Arcot to yield obedience to Lally. Their obedience was certain while Lally had the power of enforcing it; and when he ceased to possess that power, it was equally certain that the sunnud of Basalat Jung would be of

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no value beyond that of the material upon which it was inscribed. With this document, the only result of his mission, Bussy returned, and having found the French force with Basalat Jung in a state of the greatest destitution, brought it away, and by the influence of his personal credit, managed to hire four hundred native horse to add to the efficiency of the force under his command. He arrived at Arcot on the day on which Wandewash surrendered to the English. On the fall of that place, Colonel Coote advanced in the direction of Arcot, but the ravages of the French cavalry, and a body of Mahrattas, who, after being in treaty with the English, had joined the French, rendered it impracticable to obtain provisions,* and the English army being without any stores were subjected to great privation. The hardship of their situation was further aggravated by excessive rains which their tents were unable to resist, and the pressure of these circumstances forced

* The mode of dealing practised by these marauders and its consequences are thus described by Orme:—" By this time the horse brought by M. Bussy and the Mahrattas let loose by Morari Row were committing every kind of ravage and devastation in the country to the north of this river [the Palar], and as far as within twenty miles of Madras. Thousands of cattle were swept off in as many days [twenty], which they sold to the first purchaser at seven or eight for a rupee, and then made them again the booty of the next excursion. With this experience the inhabitants would no longer redeem them; after which no submission exempted them from the sword, and all abandoned the villages and open country to seek shelter in the woods, forts, and hills nearest their reach. Not a man ventured himself or his bullock with a bag of rice to the army, which for three days was totally deprived of this staple food."—History, vol. ii. page 550.

Colonel Coote to withdraw his troops into cantonments. They were stationed in the fort of Coverpauk and the adjacent villages. CHAP. V.

The main body of the French army soon after advanced from Chingleput to Arcot. Besides the addition gained by the junction of Bussy, reinforcements were obtained from other quarters. Lally had become sensible that he had too far weakened his main body by detachments to the southward, and he sought to repair the error by recalling a large portion of the troops from Seringham and from other garrisons. Colonel Coote had again brought his force into the field, having pitched his camp about midway between Coverpauk and Arcot; and the new year found the two armies in sight of each other, A.D. 1760. but both apprehensive of the consequences of an engagement. The French were the first to disturb the temporary calm, by a movement which Colonel Coote imagined to be directed against Wandewash. In this he was mistaken. The object of Lally was to attack Conjeveram, where he supposed that the English had great store of rice; and the mode in which he contrived to reach the place without exciting suspicion manifested some dexterity. For two days his progress was inexplicably slow; on the third he amused those who observed him, by putting his troops through a variety of evolutions on a large scale, which appeared to be only intended as practice, but which had the effect of throwing his whole line in the direction to which his views were turned, and to place the horse in the position most favour-

CHAP. V. able for his purpose. As soon as it became dark, he formed his troops into two divisions, and putting himself at the head of the first, he arrived in the morning at Conjeveram. But he was disappointed of his expected prize. The English had no store of provisions there, nor indeed anywhere. It appears to have been then the common mode of conducting an Indian campaign to leave the day to provide for itself. If a supply could be obtained, it was well; if untoward circumstances intervened, the troops were destined to suffer hunger.

The pagoda of Conjeveram contained some military stores, the loss of which would have been felt by the English: but Lally was without cannon to attack it; and all that he could perform was, to wreak the effects of his disappointment on the inhabitants of the town, by first plundering and then setting fire to their houses. With the booty thus acquired, and two thousand bullocks, the most valuable result of this expedition, Lally joined the other division of his army, and proceeded to Trivatore. Colonel Coote had no suspicion that the views of the French commander were directed to Conjeveram, till informed that he had arrived there by a communication from the British officer in command of the pagoda. It was late in the afternoon when the intelligence reached him; but before sunset his whole force was in motion, and the Colonel, advancing with the cavalry, arrived at Conjeveram, a distance of twenty-one miles, about an hour after midnight. In the morning the remainder of the

army arrived, but the departure of the enemy had rendered their services unnecessary.

The attack of Wandewash, however, which Colonel Coote had supposed to be the first object of Lally's movement, was to follow his disappointment at Conjeveram. To this attempt Bussy was decidedly opposed. He was of opinion that to retake Wandewash in the face of the whole British force was impracticable, and that, with reference to the circumstances of the two armies, and especially to the superiority of the French in cavalry, a preferable course would be to keep together the regular troops and detach the Mahratta horse to lay waste the English districts. It was anticipated by Bussy that the English would either be compelled to fight at a disadvantage or to fall back upon Madras for supplies; and that, in either case, the easy recovery of both Wandewash and Carangoly might be expected. Decency required that Lally should sometimes ask the advice of so distinguished an officer as Bussy, but the overweening confidence in his own talents which never forsook him led him on this occasion, as on many others, to distrust it. Infatuated by self-conceit, he appears to have attributed the advice of Bussy to jealousy of his own superior abilities, and of the probable fame which would flow from their uncontrolled exercise. The consciousness of his own feeling towards his able adviser might dispose him to believe in the existence of a corresponding feeling against himself. Lally indeed was not envious of the abilities of Bussy,

CHAP. V. for he believed his own to be immeasurably greater; but he was intensely jealous of the popularity of one whom the government had made his subordinate, but whom nature had formed his superior, and to whose qualities as a soldier and a man the homage of public respect rendered a tribute which Lally himself could not command.

Lally determined to act on his own opinion, A. D. 1760. and on the 4th of January marched with a part of his force for Wandewash. The main body he left under the command of Bussy at Trivatore, but there they did not long remain. On becoming acquainted with the departure of Lally, Colonel Coote marched and took up a position half-way between Wandewash and Chingleput, being thus within an easy distance of the former place while he secured a communication with the latter, and through it with Madras. The Mahrattas had been ordered to observe the motions of the English army; but the country was not yet quite exhausted, and while the work of plunder remained incomplete, the Mahrattas could spare time for no other occupation. Lally was consequently ignorant of the march of Colonel Coote until the day on which he halted at the position which he had chosen, when a letter from M. Bussy announced the approach of the British army. The headstrong passions of Lally readily led him to doubt of that which he did not wish to be true, and it was with hesitation and difficulty that he yielded credit to Bussy's report. He at first ordered only a part of the force to advance

from Trivatore, but the unwelcome news of the movement of the British army being confirmed from other sources, he gave permission to Bussy to exercise his own discretion with regard to the remainder. Bussy immediately marched for Wandewash with his whole force.

Colonel Coote had resolved not to advance upon the enemy till they were ready to assault, and then to make his choice according to circumstances, to attack either the troops engaged against the fort or the army on the plain which covered them. The sagacity of Bussy penetrated the intention of the English commander, and he once more cast away some good counsel in urging Lally to suspend the siege, and keep his whole force concentrated till his opponents either ventured on an engagement or withdrew. Various motives co-operated to ensure the rejection of this advice—it came from a man whom Lally hated, it impugned his judgment, and it pointed to a course which was tantamount to an acknowledgment of partial failure. All the predominating feelings of Lally's mind rebelled against it, and he determined to persevere in the siege at all hazards.

On the first arrival of Lally at Wandewash he had attacked the town with all his infantry in two divisions. They were received by a sharp fire from the troops in the town, and some mistakes being committed confusion resulted. The prosecution of the attack was thereupon deferred to the following day, when the French were observed advancing

CHAP. V. in a single column against the south side of the town with two field-pieces at their head. This attempt was near ending in the same manner as that of the preceding day. The fire to which the column was exposed brought the front "to a halt without orders,"* and but for the timely interposition of their general would have produced something worse. Lally, resembling his predecessor Dupleix in many respects, differed from him in this—that he possessed personal courage. On observing the panic which threatened to frustrate his hopes of success, he rode to the head of the column, dismounted, called for volunteers, and running forward was himself the first to enter the town. His example produced the intended effect upon those who before were on the point of shrinking. The whole column immediately poured in after him, and the troops who defended the town retired into the fort, where they arrived without loss. The French immediately began to intrench the openings of the streets facing the fort, and to raise a battery against the tower which Colonel Coote had breached, and nearly on the ground which he had occupied for the purpose. The cannon had to be brought from a distance, and A.D. 1760. it was not till the morning of the 20th January that the battery was ready to open. It was then vigorously worked, and by night had produced some effect. Intelligence of this being conveyed to Colonel Coote, he advanced the next day with his cavalry to reconnoitre, and then receiving a mes-

* Orme, vol. ii. page 575.

sage from Captain Sherlock, who defended the fort, informing him that the main rampart was breached, he retired a short distance, and gave orders to the main body of his army to advance. They joined during the night, and at sunrise Colonel Coote advanced with two troops of European horse, one thousand native horse, and two companies of sepoys, leaving orders for the main body to follow. The march of the British force was interrupted by the French cavalry and by the Mahrattas, who having recently returned from a plundering expedition, were assembled in great numbers; but these annoyances were repelled, and the English drew up in order of battle upon an open plain in sight of the French camp. Within that camp no motion was perceived, and Colonel Coote advancing with some of his officers to reconnoitre, was suffered to approach and return without interruption. Equal inactivity appeared to prevail among those engaged in the attack upon Wandewash, for no firing was heard.

On the return of Colonel Coote, he gave orders for the army to move towards the south side of the mountain of Wandewash, and in the direction of the fort. Arriving at some stony ground which protected them from the attacks of the cavalry, the British infantry again drew up in order of battle opposite to the French camp, and halted for some time in this position. The Mahrattas were spread round the foot of the mountain, but none of them ventured to approach, and some of the French cavalry who came out to reconnoitre were speedily

CHAP. V. driven back by the fire of two guns. No other notice was taken of the British force, and its commander proceeded to complete the masterly operation which he had meditated, by moving round the mountain till he had placed his army in a position which secured a free communication with the fort, while at the same time one of his flanks was protected by its fire, and the other by a tract of impassable ground: this position also gave him the opportunity of attacking at his pleasure the batteries of the enemy, their trenches, or their camp, and the latter either on the flank or in the rear. Lally now perceived that he had given an important advantage to the English, and he lost no time in endeavouring to retrieve the error. He formed his troops in order of battle with all practicable expedition, and Colonel Coote, halting his line, prepared in like manner for the conflict.

Before the two armies were within cannon-shot of each other, Lally put himself at the head of his European cavalry, three hundred in number, and taking a large sweep on the plain, came down upon the cavalry of the English. The greater part of this body were native horse, and they, it is said, pretending to wheel in order to meet the enemy, purposely threw themselves into confusion. As soon as this was effected some went off, and the rest followed after no long interval, leaving the charge of the French to be sustained by the Europeans, of whom there were only eighty. But they were ably supported by two guns under the management of

Captain Barker, who, watching the movements of the enemy and directing his own accordingly, was enabled to receive them with a point blank fire just as they were in the act of riding on to the English. In less than a minute they were thrown into confusion, and turning their horses galloped back to the French camp, Lally being the last man to retire.

During this attack the French line had been cannonading the English, but in consequence of the distance without effect. The English abstained from answering with their guns till they had advanced sufficiently near, when it being obvious that their artillery was much better managed than that of the enemy, they halted to preserve the advantage. Their fire severely galled the French infantry, who sustained it with much impatience till Lally returned from his unsuccessful charge of cavalry, when his own impetuosity concurring with the feeling of his men, he gave orders to advance. The battle now became general. After the discharge of some volleys of musketry, the regiment of Loraine formed in a column twelve in front and prepared to charge the regiment of Colonel Coote. They went forward almost at a run, and at about fifty yards distance received the fire of those against whom they were advancing. It struck down many, but did not stop their progress, which was so impetuous as to beat down those immediately opposed to it. In a moment the troops of the two nations were indiscriminately mingled in deadly conflict with the

CHAP. V. bayonet, and in another their feet were encircled by the dead and the dying. The regiment of Loraine had hitherto manifested a high degree of daring perseverance, but the feeling which had thus far supported now forsook them—they fell back and ran in disorder to regain the camp. An accident contributed to increase the alarm caused by the repulse of Loraine's regiment. A shot from one of the English guns struck a tumbril loaded with powder which was placed in a tank to the left of Lally's regiment, and about eighty men were killed or wounded by the explosion. All who were near and uninjured fled to the camp, and four hundred sepoys at some distance, who were in no danger, took the same course. Major Brereton immediately advanced to take possession of the tank before the enemy had time to recover from their confusion. Bussy, however, had succeeded in rallying a few of the fugitives, who were again posted in the tank with some additional force. Major Brereton and his men advanced at a rapid pace, suffering little from the enemy till they came close to the tank, which they forthwith assaulted and carried under a heavy fire which did great execution. Among its victims was the gallant leader of the party, Major Brereton. Some of his men on seeing him fall, rushing to render him assistance, he bade them not think of him but follow on to victory. Victory was with them. He who had led them to it lived not to participate in the triumph, but his last breath was employed in the service of

his country, and his conduct in death formed a worthy close to an honourable life. CHAP. V.

The troops dispatched against the tank being more than were deemed necessary to maintain the post, part of them formed without, to counteract any attempt that might be made to regain it. Between them and Lally's regiment the fight continued to be maintained by a brisk fire of musketry; but two field-pieces being brought to bear on the flank of the French, their line began to give way. At this juncture Bussy sought to avert impending defeat by leading to a charge; but his horse being struck by a ball, he was forced to dismount, when he had the mortification of finding that he was followed by about twenty men only. The rest had shrunk from the danger; and Bussy and his more adventurous followers were surrounded by an English party and made prisoners.*

The success of Colonel Coote against Loraine's regiment, and that of Major Brereton against Lally, decided the fortune of the day. The French troops in other parts of the field now retreated, and the British entered the enemy's camp without opposition; they also obtained possession of twenty-four pieces of cannon, a large quantity of ammunition, and such stores and baggage as had not been burned by Lally on his retreat. The loss of the English in killed and wounded was about two hundred; that of the enemy was computed to amount

* Bussy was admitted to parole on the field, and furnished with a passport to Pondicherry.

CHAP. V. to six hundred. After the cannonading, the action was maintained entirely by the European troops on both sides. Of these, the strength of the French was two thousand two hundred and fifty; that of the English nineteen hundred. Examples of courage were not wanting on either side. In numerical strength the French had the advantage—the superiority of generalship was on the side of the English—and it triumphed. The native officers in the service of the English who had been spectators of the conflict, after complimenting Colonel Coote on the victory which he had achieved, thanked him for the opportunity of viewing such a battle as they had never before seen.

A vague report of the battle and its result reached Madras by sunrise the next morning. At noon it was confirmed by the arrival of a note from Colonel Coote, written on the field with a pencil. Further accounts followed; and at last eye-witnesses, capable of detailing the most minute particulars of the victory. The joy diffused by the intelligence was unbounded.

The French after their defeat marched to Chingleput, and from thence to Gingee. The English followed them to the former place, against which they erected a battery, and cannonaded until a breach nearly practicable was made. The commandant then saved them further labour, by surrendering at discretion. Pursuing his career of success, Colonel Coote proceeded to Arcot. The fort sustained a battery for several days; but on the A. D. 1760. 10th February the English took possession of it,

and the capital of the Nabob was thus once more wrested from the French. It was believed that the fort might have held out some days longer, had not the commandant and garrison abandoned themselves to despair. At one period of the siege the English had completely exhausted their shot, and Colonel Coote sent a message to the commandant for no other purpose but to gain time to pick up what the enemy had fired. When the fort surrendered, the English stock of ammunition was so low, that on the following day the batteries must have ceased till a supply could have been obtained.

Arcot, though the chief, was far from being the only prize which fell to the English arms; many places of minor importance were in rapid succession added to the lists of the conquests, while others were silently abandoned by the French. Among those thus captured or deserted were Trinomaly, Permacoil, Alamparvah, and Devi-cottah. The possession of Karical was regarded as very important, on account of its value as a naval station, as well as because it afforded ready access to Tanjore. An expedition was fitted out against it, which, as the event proved, was almost ludicrously disproportioned to the resistance offered. This, however, was an error little to be regretted. The object sought was attained; the extent to which resistance would be carried could not precisely be estimated, and failure would have cast a shade upon the course of the English arms, detracted from the confidence engendered by recent successes, and renewed the

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hopes of the enemy. The forts of Villapore, Soolabgur, Tricalore, Trivelanore, Valdore, Chilambarum, and Cuddalore, subsequently came into the possession of the English.

These successes contributed greatly to aggravate the discontent and dissentions prevailing in Pondicherry. Lally, on arriving there after the battle of Wandewash, had been received with a torrent of invective and abuse. Accusations the most absurd and unjust were heaped on him. It was not merely of rashness, arrogance, and presumption that he was accused—to such imputations his conduct was abundantly open—but he was charged with cowardice and treason, and his return to Pondicherry was said to be a step in the execution of a design which he entertained to betray the city and its inhabitants. Every fresh instance of the success of the English exasperated the enmity which prevailed against Lally—every failure was attributed to him, whether it happened under his management or not. Lally, on his part, made no attempt to conciliate those who were opposed to him: on the contrary, he treated them with haughty defiance, and answered the charges brought against him by counter-charges of corruption and misconduct on the part of his enemies. But these ebullitions of rancour within Pondicherry would not repel the English from its gates, to which they were fast approaching, having shut up the French within a very circumscribed space, where, if able to maintain their ground, they were in imminent danger of perishing by famine. It was neces-

sary, therefore, to take some measures for relief, and it was necessary that they should be taken without delay.

Lally had always manifested a profound contempt for the natives of India, yet he now consented to avail himself of native aid. Through the agency of a Portuguese bishop, he succeeded in concluding a treaty with Hyder Ali, an adventurer who had raised himself to high station in the government of Mysore, for the services of a body of troops from that country. The immediate price to be paid for this assistance consisted of the forts of Thiagur and Elvanasore, one hundred thousand rupees per month for the service of the army, ten eighteen-pounders as a present to the general, and all the artillery and military stores in the two forts, as well as a supply of ammunition while serving for the French. There was also a prospective arrangement, relating to schemes of conquest to be realized when the English were expelled from the Carnatic. The negotiation was conducted with great secresy, and the English authorities were not aware of it till a few days before the arrival of the first division of the Mysorean troops. When the danger was known, preparation was made to repel it; but a force under Major More, dispatched to act against the Mysoreans, was met by their whole body near Trivadi, and totally routed.*

* The particulars of this defeat are nowhere given in a manner that renders the account worthy of credit. It is said that the native troops first gave way, that the European infantry followed, —and that of the troops engaged none did their duty but a small body of English cavalry, half of whom were cut to pieces and most of the remainder wounded.

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Colonel Coote was at this time engaged in besieging the fort of Villenore. Batteries had been erected and were in operation, when the French army, with the whole of the Mysorean force, appeared in sight. A detachment was sent to check the advanced parties while the line got under arms, and another to maintain the villages in the vicinity of the batteries, which by this time had beaten down the parapet and silenced the fire from the fort. These effects, followed by the advance of a few sepoys, so discouraged the officer in command, that at this critical moment he most unexpectedly held out a flag of truce, and opened his gates to the English. The astonishment of the French may be conceived, when they saw their own colours suddenly hauled down to make way for those of the English, and found the guns on the rampart turned upon themselves and their Mysorean allies. The effect was to paralyse their entire force. All the lines stopped at once and without orders, as though stricken simultaneously by some sudden visitation which deprived them of the power of motion. Lally, when sufficiently recovered from the astounding effect of this surprise, gave orders to retreat. Had the surrender of the fort been delayed a few minutes, its fate would have been determined by the result of a general engagement.

For some time after the capture of Villenore the war in the Carnatic presents little deserving of notice, except the departure of the Mysoreans, in consequence partly of the indifferent prospects of

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their French allies, but principally because the situation of Hyder Ali at home required all the force that he could command. In September, Lally made an attack upon the English camp, which was planned with considerable skill, and to a certain extent well executed; but a mistake occurred in the disposition of one of the divisions engaged in it, and the attempt produced nothing but an accession of bitter feeling between Lally and his associates in arms. Lally attributed intentional misconduct to the commander of the division in which the failure occurred, and alleged that he was actuated by envy of the glory which was about to encircle the brows of him by whose genius the attack was suggested, and under whose auspices it was advancing to a successful issue. The French officers and authorities at this time seem to have been remarkably liberal in giving to each other credit for the possession of every evil and contemptible quality.

The officers in the English army kept themselves free from the scandal attached to the open and disgraceful quarrels of the French; but they were not without causes of disunion and discontent. Some ships recently arrived from England had brought reinforcements, which were highly acceptable; but they also brought commissions from the Crown appointing Majors Brereton and Monson lieutenant-colonels, with priority over Colonel Coote. These officers were not to assume the advantages of their seniority while Colonel Coote remained in the Carnatic; but Major Monson (the only survivor, Major

CHAP. V. Brereton having fallen at Wandewash) seemed disposed to yield as little as possible of the dignity of his new rank. Instead of offering to serve under his present commander, he proposed to retire to Madras; but Colonel Coote determined to remove the difficulty by withdrawing to the command in Bengal, to which he had been originally appointed. He accordingly delivered over the command to Monson, and proceeding to Madras, demanded permission for himself and his regiment to depart for Bengal. The presidency demurred, and Colonel Monson declared that if the regiment were withdrawn, the hope of reducing Pondicherry must be abandoned. Coote then consented to leave his regiment, and to proceed to Bengal without it. Between Coote and Monson some difference of opinion had existed as to the mode of carrying on operations against Pondicherry. Before the arrival of the new commissions, Coote had ordered a force to march and invest the fort of Ariancopang; but Monson did not approve of the movement, and Coote, who appears to have surrendered his own judgment with great facility to that of his second in command, countermanded the order for the march of the detachment. Monson had in view another operation, which his acquisition of the command enabled him to carry into effect. Pondicherry was surrounded by a hedge of trees and thorns, and this natural defence was strengthened by four redoubts. Against these, and a French post at Oulgarry, the attack was directed. It was in some respects

ill-conducted. Some mistakes happened: one of them through the disappearance, at the moment when most wanted, of Major Robert Gordon, the same officer whose inexplicable absence had occasioned so much mischief at Wandewash; but the French abandoned three of the redoubts and several pieces of cannon. This measure of success was not obtained without severe loss on the part of the English. Among the wounded was Colonel Monson, and the chief command consequently devolved on Major Gordon, whose incompetence within a few hours afterwards exposed the main body of his army to a night attack, which was disappointed of success only by the desperate valour of those by whom the English posts were defended. Happily the command was soon transferred to abler hands. Colonel Coote had not yet left Madras, and Colonel Monson, whose wound was so severe as to render it certain that for a considerable time he would be incapacitated for service, strenuously requested that his predecessor would resume the command. The presidency seconded the request with equal earnestness, and Colonel Coote complied. His military talents were forthwith exercised with the same perseverance and success which had distinguished his former command.

In the meantime the prospects of Lally and the inhabitants of Pondicherry were constantly becoming more gloomy. The troops within were insufficient to the defence of the place; but famine

CHAP. V. was threatening to assail them, and the absence of a large part of the French force at a distance was actually regarded as an advantage, on account of the difficulty which would have been found in subsisting them in Pondicherry. No forage being procurable, the few cavalry that remained were sent away, although their departure further diminished the strength on which the town rested for defence, and both horses and men were likely to be taken by the English. Distress at length attained that stage when man regards his competitor for bread as an incumbrance from which he must deliver himself, whatever the

A.D. 1760. means. On the 27th December an unwilling train passed out of the town, forced from their homes by the arm of power. They were the native inhabitants of both sexes and of every age. With the exception of a few domestic servants, whose labours ministered to the comfort of the richer and more powerful Europeans, all were expelled. Their number was fourteen hundred, and when the gates of the town closed upon the last, not one of the number knew whither to turn his steps for succour or even for safety. To escape death from famine was to meet it from the sword. The unhappy fugitives wandered in families and companies to various points, but everywhere the challenge of the English sepoy warned them back. They returned to the gates which had voided them forth, and implored to be admitted to the privilege of sharing the common lot of those among whom they had lived—but in vain. The energy of despair prompting some to attempt to force their

way, they were met and dismissed from suffering by discharges of musketry and of the cannon of the fort. Through eight days these miserable outcasts continued to traverse the space within which they were circumscribed, repeating their importunities at the gates of the town for admittance, and at the English posts for permission to pass, and finding their petitions rejected alike by friends and foes. During this time the scantily spread roots of grass afforded their only means of subsistence. Their enemies at last yielded to the feeling of pity, which seemed lost among those on whom the sufferers had the strongest claim. The English commander allowed them to pass; and though they had neither home nor friend in prospect, their joy on being delivered from the lingering death by which they were threatened was unbounded. Thanks were tendered for this act of indulgence, and blessings bestowed on those by whom it was granted, with a warmth which bore witness to the horror with which these wretched people regarded the situation from which they had escaped. It is creditable to the character of Mahomet Ali, who had recently arrived in the British camp, that he concurred in the act of mercy extended to the fugitives. CHAP. V.

On the 8th December four batteries were completed, and at midnight they opened against the town. They continued to fire at intervals during several days, but with little effect beyond harassing the garrison, who, suffering greatly from want of provisions, were little able to endure fatigue. From A. D. 1760.

CHAP. V. the time of the expulsion of the native inhabitants, the soldiers had been put on famine allowance. A general search for provisions had on one occasion been made; a second, which was threatened, was averted by the interposition of the superior of the Jesuits, who, it is said, "knew all the secrets of the town,"* and who promised, if the search were relinquished, to produce provisions for fifteen days, beyond which he could give no further hope. On the 30th December the English suffered severely from a dreadful storm. The sea broke over the beach and overflowed the country, carrying away the batteries and redoubts. Their tents were destroyed and their ammunition rendered useless, while the soldiers, in many instances, abandoned their muskets in their anxiety for personal safety. Many of the native retainers of the camp perished. The destructive effects of the storm were not unobserved in Pondicherry, and had it been possible to move artillery through the wide-spread waters, a sally would have been made, which probably would have been but feebly opposed. Orme says that three hundred men properly armed would not, for three hours after daylight, have met with a hundred together in a condition to resist them.† The squadron which was stationed to prevent the introduction of provisions into Pondicherry by sea felt the effects of the storm. Several ships were stranded, and most of the remaining ones considerably damaged. The repairs of the latter were, however, carried on with

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* Orme, vol. ii. page 708. † History, vol. ii. page 710.

great celerity, and within a week Pondicherry was again blockaded by an English fleet. Similar diligence was employed in restoring the works and stations of the army. On the 5th January an attempt was made to supply part of the loss which had been sustained, by an attack upon a redoubt which still remained in the possession of the enemy, and the command of which, if gained, would more effectually impede the access of supplies to the town than the posts which had been destroyed. Possession was gained by stratagem, and the English applied themselves to work to make some necessary additions to the works; but on the following morning the post was vigorously attacked by a party from the garrison, and after a very indifferent defence, the officer in command and the greater part of his men surrendered themselves prisoners. This affair would scarcely deserve notice, did not its conclusion mark the distress which prevailed in Pondicherry. Lally sent back all the prisoners to the English camp under a promise not to serve again—the French being unable to spare food to keep them alive.

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On the 12th January the English began to open trenches. Nearly fourteen hundred men were employed in this work, which was conducted with extraordinary rapidity and great caution. One battery had been at work since the 10th; others were in preparation, when a flag of truce announced the approach of a deputation. They came on foot, having neither horses nor palanquin bearers. They bore a gasconading memorial from Lally, reproach-

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ing the English with breach of faith in the capture of Chandernagore, and other proceedings, which conduct on the part of the English, it was represented, put it out of the French general's power to propose any capitulation for the city of Pondicherry. Nevertheless, he and his troops, reduced to extremity by want of provisions, were ready to surrender themselves prisoners of war—the English to take possession of the town on the following morning, and of the fort the day after. For the citizens and religious professors he claimed a cartel, and for the mother and sisters of Rajah Sahib permission to seek an asylum wherever they should think proper, or at least that they should remain prisoners with the English, and "not," said the memorialist, "be delivered over to the hands of Mahomet Ali, still tinged with the blood of the father and husband which he shed, to the shame indeed of those who delivered up Chunda Sahib to him, but to the shame likewise of the commander of the English army, who ought not to have suffered such a barbarity to have been committed within his camp." On the part of the governor and council of Pondicherry another memorial was presented, claiming personal freedom for the inhabitants, security for their property, and protection to the Roman Catholic religion. Colonel Coote gave a short answer to Lally, declining to enter into discussion on the breaches of faith charged against the English, and accepting the offer of surrender at discretion. Accordingly, on the following morning the English were admitted

to possession of the town, and as some tumult was apprehended, the citadel was delivered up on the evening of the same day.

When the authority of Lally was at an end, those who had been subjected to it gave unrestrained vent to their feelings of dislike. A crowd assembled to witness his departure for Madras. On his appearance they raised a general shout of derisive execration, and would probably have proceeded to violence, had they not been prevented by the escort. The shout was renewed on the appearance of Dubois, the King's commissary, who stopped and said he was ready to answer any one. One of the crowd stepped forward and drew his sword. Dubois did the same—he was a man advanced in years, and labouring under the infirmity of defective sight—the second pass laid him dead at his antagonist's feet. No one would assist his servant to remove the body; and the man who had taken his life was regarded as having performed a meritorious act.*

* Lally, whose career has occupied the greater part of this chapter, was a member of an Irish family which had followed the fortunes of James II. to France. He entered the French army, and drew up the plan of a descent upon England, which, however, the discouraging result of Charles Edward's attempt in 1745 prevented from being adopted. In conformity with the precedent established in the case of Dupleix, his reception in France, to which country he was soon allowed to return, was the reverse of what might have been anticipated for one who, whatever his errors, had laboured strenuously to maintain the French interests in India. His arrogance and indiscretion had converted almost all who had served with him into enemies; and at home his ill success was regarded as an inexpiable offence. He was thrown into prison, and accused of abuse of authority, extortion,

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On the fourth day after the surrender, Mr. Pigot, the governor of Madras, demanded that Pondicherry should be delivered over to the presidency, as having become the property of the East-India Company. Colonel Coote called a council, consisting of the chief officers both of the army and the fleet, and they decided against the claim made by the governor of Madras. The contest might have occupied considerable time, had it not been cut short by a declaration from Mr. Pigot, that if Pondicherry were not delivered up, the presidency of Madras would not furnish money for the subsistence either of the king's troops or of the French prisoners. This stopped all further argument, and the authority of the presidency was admitted, under protest.

When Fort St. David fell into the hands of the French, its fortifications had been destroyed. The court of France had indeed instructed Lally to destroy all the maritime possessions of the English which might fall into his hands. The Court of Directors of the English East-India Company had, in retaliation, ordered their governments to resort to

and treason. The charges being preferred by the administration conviction necessarily followed, and the services of Lally were rewarded by the loss of his head. He was executed on the 6th May, 1766, being then in the 66th year of his age. Twelve years afterwards his son, Lally Tollendal, obtained a reversal of the proceedings, and was admitted to the possession of his father's estates. He subsequently took an active part in the French Revolution; but in the struggles which followed he was doomed by the Septembrizers as a victim. He had the good fortune to escape to England. At a later period he returned to France, and was by Louis XVIII. made a member of the Chamber of Peers.

similar measures in the case of conquests made from the French. In consequence of these orders, the fortifications of Pondicherry were demolished; and with a view further to embarrass any attempt that might be made by the French to re-establish themselves in India, all the buildings within the works were subsequently destroyed.

From the time when Pondicherry fell, the French power in the Carnatic was virtually at an end. Gingee still remained in their possession, as did also Thiagur, which had been restored by the Mysoreans on their departure: but the former yielded to a force under Captain Stephen Smith; and the latter, after sustaining sixty-five days of blockade and bombardment, capitulated to Major Preston. Mahé, and its dependencies on the coast of Malabar, also surrendered; and early in the year 1761 the French had neither any regular military force in any part of India, nor any local possessions, except their factories of Calicut and Surat, which were merely trading establishments. In that spirit of universal conquest by which they had long been animated, the French had sought to establish a commanding empire in India—vast efforts had been made to effect this object—and after a series of wars, occupying many years, nothing remained to them but the recollection of defeat.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAP. VI.

THE revolution which placed Meer Jaffier on the throne of Bengal was followed by the usual attendants upon a new and unsettled government—discontent, disturbance, and alarm. A very short time had elapsed when three distinct rebellions were raised in different parts of the country; while Roydooloob, who had been one of the most valuable of Meer Jaffier's friends, and was now one of the most powerful of his dependents, became alienated from his master; and to add to the difficulties of the new sovereign, an invasion of his dominions was threatened from Oude. The aid of Clive was indispensable to extricate Meer Jaffier from his difficulties; but coldness, if not positive dislike, was engendered between them, by the reluctance of the new sovereign to fulfil the pecuniary stipulations to which he had bound himself. Clive, however, applied himself vigorously to remove the difficulties which surrounded Meer Jaffier, and to procure the discharge of the English claims. His endeavours were not without success. He allayed the intestine commotions by which the new government was threatened, obtained payment of part of the sums due to the English, and security for the rest; and finally ac-

companied Meer Jaffier to Patna, with a view to overawe foreign enemies by the exhibition of a powerful force on the frontier, and by the same means to facilitate the attainment of that which was an object of strong desire as well as of high importance both to the sovereign of Bengal and his English protectors—a sunnud from Delhi confirming Meer Jaffier in the authority which the English had conferred upon him.

Soon after his return to Calcutta a despatch was received from England, directing the establishment of a new system of administering the government of Bengal. By a despatch dated some months earlier, but which arrived only at the same time with that by which its provisions were superseded, a committee of five had been appointed, in which Clive, if in Bengal, was to preside. By the later arrangement, a council of ten was nominated. The office of president was to be held by the four senior members in rotation, each for three months; but Clive was altogether passed over. The members of the new council were, however, unanimously of opinion that the state of affairs required that the office of president should be permanently held by some one person, and they were equally unanimous in judging that Clive should be the person selected. In compliance with these views they requested him to undertake the office. He was at first disposed to decline, but finally yielded to the urgent representations of persons of all ranks and parties in Bengal entreating him, by his regard to the public interest,

CHAP. VI. not to refuse his services at so critical a period.* He was greatly offended by the apparent neglect of the Court of Directors, and had they manifested an intentional disregard of his services his anger would not have been without cause; but the probability is, that they believed him to be no longer in Bengal. In naming him president under the previous arrangement, the contingency of his departure from that part of India was referred to and provided for. From his own letters the Court had reason to conclude that he had returned to Madras, and though they were aware of the capture of Calcutta, they were ignorant of the subsequent proceedings against Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, of the battle of Plassy and its consequences. The wisdom of the arrangement which restricted the exercise of the authority of president of council to so short a period as three months may fairly be questioned, but there is not the slightest reason for believing that any intention existed of offering violence to the feelings of Clive, or casting his merits into the shade. The absence of any such intention is indeed placed beyond doubt by the fact that, three months before the council invited Clive to accept the office of president, he had been appointed to it by the Court of Directors on their becoming aware of his protracted residence in Bengal, and of the new claims which he had established to the confidence of his employers.†

* Malcolm's Memoirs of Clive, vol. i. page 356.

† These circumstances are placed in a very clear and satisfactory light by Mr. Auber.—Rise and Progress of the British Power in India, vol. i. pages 65 to 68. It is remarkable that

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The conduct of the council, in setting aside on their own authority an arrangement to which they were bound to conform, must be viewed as an extraordinary measure, justifiable only under extraordinary circumstances. They thought that the safety of the British interests in Bengal rested upon Clive, and with reference both to his abilities and his influence they were warranted in so thinking. Some of them sacrificed the prospect of personal elevation in supporting the claims of Clive, and no suspicion can be raised that their motives were other than honest and patriotic.

It was shortly after Clive, in compliance with the unanimous request of his associates, had undertaken the office of president, that the expedition under Colonel Forde was dispatched to the Northern Circars. The progress of that expedition, and its brilliant result, the capture of Masulipatam, have already been related.

The court of Meer Jaffier in the meantime continued to be a scene of intrigues, in which the sovereign and his son Meerun were no less active than their inferiors. A detail of them would possess

Sir John Malcolm should, at page 351 of his Memoirs of Clive, denounce his exclusion from the presidency as "the crude offspring of faction and mistrust," and only eleven pages afterwards (362) should dismiss the question in the following language:—"The Court of Directors had formed this government of rotation at a period when they could not have anticipated the great change which had taken place in Bengal. That this was the case is proved by the subsequent appointment of Clive to the station of governor the moment they heard of the battle of Plassy."

CHAP. VI. little of either instruction or interest: they may therefore be passed over among the countless number of similar emanations of a tortuous and vicious policy, which, if it were only for the sake of a reasonable brevity, the historian of India must dismiss without notice. But a new danger menaced the throne of Meer Jaffier, in a threatened invasion of Behar by the Shazada or eldest son of the Emperor of Delhi. He had fled from the capital of his father, and having by the influence of his rank collected a body of military followers, was instigated by the Soubahdar of Oude, and, as it was believed, by the governor of Behar, to march against the dominions of Meer Jaffier. The chief promoter of the movement was probably Law, who was unwearied in submitting to the ruler of Oude representations of the unsettled state of Bengal, of the encouragement thus afforded to an invasion of that country, and of the certainty of a large French force soon arriving there. Meer Jaffier was not in a condition to regard this accession to his troubles with calmness. His troops were in a state of mutiny, and refused to march unless their arrears were paid.*

* The following passage from Sir John Malcolm is quoted as throwing light on the situation of Meer Jaffier, as well as opening a curious page in the chapter of native manners: "To add to these difficulties, Juggett Seit and his brother, who have been often mentioned as the powerful soucars (or bankers) of the country, had obtained leave to proceed on a pilgrimage to Pursnauth, and had commenced their journey, when information was received that they were in correspondence with the Shazada, and had actually furnished him with the means of paying his new levies. The nabob, giving credit to this report, sent to stop

From Clive he had long been in a state of considerable estrangement; but on this, as on every occasion of difficulty, he turned to him for assistance and protection. Indeed it appears that not only the prince, but all classes of his subjects, including even the mutinous troops, looked to Clive, and to Clive alone, to extricate them from the embarrassments and dangers which surrounded and hung over them. His countenance and support were at the same time sought by the Shazada, and he was assured that the prince "had thoughts of doing great things through his counsel and in conjunction with him." Clive apprehending that a knowledge of these overtures might alarm Meer Jaffier, was careful to send him copies of all the letters.

Meer Jaffier was so much alarmed by the advance

them; but they refused compliance with his order, and proceeded under the guard of the two thousand men which he had furnished for their escort. These troops, on receiving a promise of the liquidation of their arrears, readily transferred their allegiance from the prince to his bankers. The nabob, if he had had the disposition, would probably have found himself without the means of coercing these wealthy subjects into obedience. The principal bankers of India command, through the influence of their extensive credit, the respect of sovereigns and the support of their principal ministers and generals. Their property, though often immense, is seldom in a tangible form. Their great profits enable them to bear moderate exactions; and the prince who has recourse to violence towards one of this class is not only likely to fail in his immediate object of plunder, but is certain to destroy his future resources, and to excite an impression of his character that must greatly facilitate those attempts against his life and power to which it is the lot of despots to be continually exposed." —Memoirs of Clive, vol. i. page 391 to 393.

CHAP. VI. of the Shazada, that he had seriously contemplated the expediency of purchasing his retreat. Clive expressed little apprehension of the result, but urged the necessity of a military force advancing in the direction in which the descent was threatened. Putting himself at the head of about four hundred and fifty Europeans, and two thousand five hundred sepoys, he avowed his belief that he should be able to "give a good account of the Shazada, though his army were said to be thirty thousand strong."* The invading army were besieging Patna. It was well defended by the governor of the province, who nevertheless was calculating the chances of success on both sides, in order to determine to which he should finally attach himself. The advance of Clive decided the question. The governor redoubled his exertions: the enemy was driven back after gaining possession of some of the bastions, and the repulse was followed by the Shazada abruptly breaking up his camp and retreating with great precipitation. This step was occasioned partly by the approach of Clive's advanced guard, and partly by the sovereign of Oude having seized Allahabad, the capital of Mahomed Kooli, a prince engaged in assisting the Shazada. The fugitives hastened to cross the river which divides the territories of Bengal from Oude; but the latter country afforded no asylum to the Shazada, its ruler, by whom the invasion of Behar had been encouraged, being now the avowed

* Letter to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, 12th March, 1759.

enemy of those who made the attempt. From his father the wandering prince had nothing to hope. The Emperor was kept in a state of pupilage by an ambitious and powerful minister; and it was to escape a similar state of thraldom that the Shazada had fled the court. Not knowing whither to turn, the prince sought the protection of the British Government; but the emperor, or his minister acting in his name, had dispatched an edict to Meer Jaffier, enjoining him as his vassal to seize and secure the person of his rebellious son. The empire of Delhi was fast approaching to its close; but public opinion still attached high respect to its authority, and it was not desirable to embroil either the English or their native ally with a power which claimed supremacy throughout India, and which, though weak in actual resources, was strong in the recollections of ancient grandeur. Clive thereupon felt compelled to decline complying with the wish of the prince, but he sent him a sum of money, equal to about a thousand pounds, to enable him to make his escape.

The results of this invasion were fortunate both to Meer Jaffier and to Clive. The Shazada had previously borne the title (for this was all that he ever possessed) of Soubahdar of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. His disobedience to the reputed authority of his father led to the transfer of the titular distinction of Soubahdar to the Emperor's second son, Meer Jaffier being named as his lieutenant, with a perfect understanding that he should retain the substantial power, of which he was already in pos-

CHAP. VI. session. Clive, at the solicitation of Meer Jaffier, was made an omrah of the empire, an honour which he accepted without appearing to consider how far he was justified in receiving it without the permission of his own sovereign, or whether the authority which he thereby gave to the Emperor to demand his military service might not at some time interfere with his duty to the East-India Company or his natural allegiance to the crown of Great Britain. A more substantial reward of Clive's services followed. To sustain the honour conferred by his feudal superior, Meer Jaffier bestowed on the fortunate captain who had raised him to a throne, and kept him there, a jaghire or estate. It was the quit-rent of certain lands which had been granted to the East-India Company, and was alleged to be worth thirty thousand pounds per annum. Clive accepted this mark of favour with as little hesitation as the former. He had indeed manifested some feeling of disappointment at its delay, and had taken occasion to remind Meer Jaffier that a competent jaghire was a convenient and almost indispensable appendage to the dignity of an omrah. How far the servants of the Company were justified in accepting valuable gifts from native princes is a question which has been already considered, and it will consequently be unnecessary to renew the inquiry in this place. All that can be urged in Clive's favour is, that he meditated no concealment; and, indeed, as the Company were to be his tenants, concealment was impossible. But although it was thus inevitable that his employ-

ers must become aware of the gift, it is not the less clear that it ought not to have been accepted without their previous consent.* CHAP. VI.

It has already been seen that the course of events in India, at this period, was not marked by any pedantic adherence to the principles of international law. A fresh instance is about to be adduced of the looseness with which the political relations of Europe operated in the East. The Dutch, in common with their European neighbours, had suffered from the exactions of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah. On this account they were not displeased with his downfall; but either from jealousy of the power by which it had been effected, or from some other cause, they were slow in acknowledging the authority of his successor. This gave great offence to Meer Jaffier, and on his being suffered to pass their settlement of Chinsura without the usual compliment of a salute, he stopped their trade. The Dutch, always humble when humility could promote their commercial interests, made a submissive apology, and were thereupon admitted to the advantages which they had previously enjoyed. They were now as assiduous in cultivating the favour of the prince as before they had been negligent in offering him even ordinary marks of respect. Meer Jaffier had begun to be

* Clive was disposed to take credit for the moderation which he had displayed in his drafts upon native princes; but thirty thousand pounds per annum was certainly not a contemptible reward for assisting in frightening away the Shazada. Fighting there was none on the part of Clive.

CHAP. VI. weary of his English patrons, and was not indisposed to shake them off. The Dutch were envious of the advantage enjoyed by the English in a monopoly of saltpetre which had been granted them by Meer Jaffier, and further felt aggrieved by the English government requiring all ships coming into the river to take English pilots—a precautionary measure rendered necessary by the circumstances of the times. Under the influence of a sense of common grievance, Meer Jaffier and the Dutch, it was believed, had entered into a private negotiation, the object of which was to bring into Bengal a Dutch force to act as a counterbalance to that of the English. Some months after the date assigned to this negotiation, it was ascertained that a powerful armament was fitting out at Batavia. Its destination was unknown, but it was rumoured to be Bengal. By this time the adverse feeling of Meer Jaffier towards the English had undergone some change. Their arms were everywhere successful, and the magnificence with which the ruler of Bengal had rewarded the services of Clive in delivering him from the invasion of the Shazada, attested the value which he now attached to his friendship. He was, therefore, not prepared to provoke their hostility. The news of the preparations in Batavia was consequently followed by an expression of the displeasure of Meer Jaffier addressed to the Dutch authorities, and by a demand upon the English for the fulfilment of that provision of the treaty which bound them to render assistance to the Nabob in resisting

the introduction into his country of any foreign force. Soon afterwards a Dutch ship arrived full of troops. Meer Jaffier repeated his remonstrances to the Dutch and his demand for the aid of the English. The answer of the Dutch was, that the ship came in from accident for water and provisions, having been driven from her destined port of Negapatam by stress of weather, and that both the vessel and the troops should leave the river as soon as their wants were supplied. It is almost unnecessary to say that no credence was given to this statement. Measures were taken to prevent surprise—all Dutch boats were subjected to a rigorous search, and on board of one belonging to the Dutch master-attendant some troops were found, which were forthwith taken back to the ship. These proceedings gave rise to much altercation and remonstrance between the Dutch and English authorities.

About two months after these occurrences, intelligence was received of the arrival of six other ships in the river, and these, in the words of Clive, "crammed with soldiers." This intelligence found Meer Jaffier on a visit to Clive at Calcutta. He was manifestly embarrassed by it, not discerning how he might preserve appearances at the same time with the Dutch, whose assistance he had invited, and with the English, whose power he dreaded and whose alliance it was most desirable for him to maintain. On leaving Calcutta, he professed to be going to reside three or four days at his fort of Hooghly, and declared that from thence he would

CHAP. VI. chastise the insolence of the Dutch, and soon drive them out of the river again. But instead of proceeding to the fort, he took up his residence at a place about half-way between it and the settlement of Chinsura, where he received the Dutch authorities with all the grace and benignity that royal condescension could shew to the most favoured friends. In a few days he made a communication to Clive, informing him that he had granted some indulgence to the Dutch in their trade, and that they had engaged to leave the river with their ships and troops as soon as the season would permit. This was an obvious subterfuge, as was at once perceived. Clive, referring to this communication, says: "The season permitting their immediate departure with the greatest safety and propriety, the last condition in the Nabob's letter, joined to his whole behaviour, convinced us that leaving the river was no part of their intention; but that, on the contrary, they had his assent to bring up the troops if they could." This view of the subject was confirmed by the event. Instead of leaving the river the ships began to move up; and it was found that the Dutch were enlisting troops at Chinsura, Cossimbazar, and Patna—a process which could scarcely be carried on without the connivance of Meer Jaffier. When their preparations were thought complete, the Dutch addressed to the English authorities a remonstrance of great length and formidable purport. It recorded the grievances sustained from the assumption by the English of the right of search,

and the obstructions offered by them to the passage of the ships of the Dutch up the river, and concluded with denunciations of vengeance if redress were withheld. The English replied with calmness, justifying what they had done as having been performed under the orders of the Nabob, and under the colours of his liege lord the Emperor of Delhi; recommending an application to the Nabob on the subject of complaint; and—in a strain which Clive himself says "may be thought to savour a little of audacity"—tendering the friendly offices of the British government to mitigate the resentment of the native sovereign. The contending parties were now on the verge of active hostility, and the position of the English governor and council was one of extreme delicacy. If they suffered the Dutch to pass, they compromised the safety of the British settlements and power; if they resisted, they might plunge the two countries into war, and themselves into disgrace and ruin. "In this situation," says Clive, "we anxiously wished that the next hour would bring us news of a declaration of war with Holland." The desired news was not received; but the Dutch relieved Clive and his council from part of their anxiety, by committing various acts of violence, which could not be expected to pass without reprisal. Still to offer resistance to the passage up the Ganges of the vessels of a power nominally friendly appeared to some timid politicians a strong measure—and the race of timid politicians appears to have been about this time very numerous in

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Bengal. Some of them endeavoured to imbue the mind of Clive with their own doubts, and to alarm him by representations of the personal danger which he incurred. His reply is said to have been, "A public man may occasionally be called upon to act with a halter round his neck."* Clive shrunk not from the responsibility which attended a vigorous course of action, but prepared to vindicate his country's honour and to advance his own.†

It was matter of doubt whether the Dutch intended to bring their ships past the English batteries, or whether they would land the troops below and march them through the country. Clive provided, as far as he had the means, against both. Colonel Forde, who had returned from the Deccan,‡ was dispatched to the northward with a force designed to alarm the Dutch authorities at Chinsura, as well as to intercept the troops of the enemy if they should proceed by land. Heavy cannon were mounted

* Malcolm's Life of Clive, vol. ii. page 99.

† His disinterestedness in taking this determination is placed beyond doubt by the fact that, being in the habit of making remittances home through the Dutch East-India Company, he had at the time large sums in their hands.—First Report, page 157.

‡ Colonel Forde was an officer of Aldercron's regiment, and his merit early attracted the notice of Clive. When his regiment proceeded to England, Colonel Forde preferred to remain in the Company's service; but the Court of Directors had refused to confirm him, and at this decision he not unnaturally felt some displeasure. He was also in very bad health; but it is greatly to his honour, that neither the state of his health, nor the offence which had been given him, were suffered to deprive the government of Bengal of his services.

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at Charnoc's battery and the fort of Tannas, which places had been occupied for the purpose of enforcing search; while three Company's ships, all that were in the river, were ordered to pass the Dutch vessels and take their station above the batteries, where fire-boats were placed and other preparations were made to destroy the Dutch ships if they attempted to effect a passage.

A. D. 1759.

On the 21st November the Dutch ships came to anchor a little below the English batteries, and on the 23rd they landed on the opposite shore a large body of European and Malay troops. On the same day orders were sent to the commodore of the English squadron, Captain Wilson, to demand from the Dutch commodore restitution of all the English persons, vessels, and property seized and detained by him; and in the event of refusal he was, in the usual language of such commissions, to "fight, sink, burn, and destroy" the ships of those of whom it would now be absurd to speak otherwise than as "the enemy." The demand was made and refused, whereupon Captain Wilson proceeded to act upon the concluding part of his orders with that spirit in which the marine of England, whether royal or commercial, have rarely been deficient. Undismayed by the inequality of force, he attacked the enemy, and after an engagement of two hours the Dutch commodore struck his colours; five of his ships followed his example, and six out of seven vessels which constituted the Dutch fleet became at once prize to the English. One succeeded in getting away, but was intercepted below

CHAP. VI. and captured by two other English ships, which had just arrived. The number of prisoners taken by Captain Wilson is said to have been three times the number of the men under his command.*

On the same day on which the naval supremacy of England was thus nobly asserted and sustained, Colonel Forde was attacked by the garrison of Chinsura while on his march to take up a position between that place and Chandernagore. They had posted themselves with four pieces of cannon amid the buildings of the last-named place. From this cover they were soon dislodged, when they fled to Chinsura, abandoning their cannon, and pursued with some loss to the very barriers of the town.

The following day decided the question of success. Colonel Forde having been apprized of the approach of the troops landed from the Dutch ships, and of their having been joined by part of the garrison of Chinsura, marched with two field-pieces, and met them on a plain, where an action ensued. The force of the Dutch consisted of eight hundred Europeans and seven hundred Malays, besides some troops of the country. They were commanded by Colonel Roussel, a Frenchman. The European force of the English fell considerably short of four hundred; in addition, they had about eight hundred sepoys.†

* So stated by Clive, First Report, page 157.

† Clive, in his Evidence before the Parliamentary Committee, 1772, states the numbers to have been three hundred Europeans, eight hundred sepoys, and about one hundred and fifty of the Nabob's cavalry, but these were of no use except in pursuit. In a narrative drawn up by Clive soon after the action, and

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The action has been justly described as "short, bloody, and decisive."* Its duration was less than half an hour, and the Dutch were entirely routed, leaving dead on the field about a hundred and twenty Europeans and two hundred Malays. About a hundred and fifty were wounded; three hundred Europeans, including Colonel Roussel and fourteen officers and two hundred Malays, were made prisoners. The loss of the English was inconsiderable.†

Colonel Forde reported his success, and requested further orders. Had he been directed to march against Chinsura, it must have yielded on a summons; but this step was prevented by an humble application from the Dutch for a restoration of the

printed in Sir John Malcolm's memoirs of him, the number of Europeans is represented to have amounted to three hundred and seventy, but some of them are stated to have been volunteers.

* Narrative above referred to.

† Sir John Malcolm relates an anecdote, and he says, on good authority, which illustrates the calmness of Clive under circumstances which might have excused some degree of excitement, not less than his habit of prompt decision. On the approach of the Dutch force, Colonel Forde, desirous of being armed with adequate authority for treating as enemies a people with whom the English were ostensibly at peace, wrote a note to Clive, saying that if he had the order of council he could attack the Dutch with a fair prospect of destroying them. Clive was playing at cards when he received the communication, and without quitting the table, he wrote the following answer with a pencil:—

"Dear Forde,

"Fight them immediately; I will send you the order of council to-morrow."

The instruction was followed, and with what success has been shewn in the text.

CHAP. VI. relations of peace. A treaty was concluded, by which they disavowed the acts of their naval commander, acknowledged themselves the aggressors, and agreed to reimburse the English East-India Company the amount of damage which they had sustained, and the charges of the war. On this arrangement the ships of the Dutch were delivered up to them.

Three days after the battle, the Dutch learned by the encampment of Meerun, son of Meer Jaffier, with several thousand horse within a short distance of Chinsura, that there was another party besides the English with whom they had an account to settle. They had been defeated, and this rendered it in the eyes of the Nabob highly inexpedient to maintain with them the appearance of friendship. The terror of the Dutch was extreme, and they implored the protection of Clive, entreating him, in the most earnest as well as the most abject terms, to stand between them and the threatened infliction of Mahometan vengeance. He consented to give them the benefit of his good offices, and proceeded immediately to a situation near Chinsura, in order to check with more certainty than could be ensured at a distance the conduct of Meerun, of whose cruel and capricious temper some sudden and violent outbreak might not unreasonably be expected. Deputies from the Dutch government were subsequently admitted to audience by Meerun, and after some altercation the basis of a treaty was agreed upon. The terms were, that the Nabob should protect them in their trade

and privileges, on condition that they should never meditate war, introduce or enlist troops, or raise fortifications without his consent—that they should never keep more than one hundred and twenty-five European soldiers in the country for the service of their several factories, Chinsura, Cossimbazar, and Patna, and that they should forthwith send away their ships and remaining troops. A breach of any of these conditions was to be punished by entire and utter expulsion from the territories of Meer Jaffier. The treaty being concluded, and the Nabob satisfied for the trouble and expense of the march of his troops, the Dutch were delivered from the apprehension caused by their vicinity.*

The restoration of peace on the coast was to be followed by the recurrence of hostilities in the interior. Before the arrangement of affairs with the Dutch was completed, it was ascertained that the Shazada was again preparing to enter the province of Behar, supported by several powerful zemindars; and that the foujdar of Purneah had taken the field on the eastern bank of the Ganges, about half-way between Patna and Moorshedabad, with the intention, as it was believed, of joining the invader.†

* The details of the dispute with the Dutch are drawn principally from the evidence of Clive before the Parliamentary Committee, and a narrative (previously mentioned) found among Clive's papers by Sir John Malcolm, and by him published.

† This person had, during the previous campaign against the Shazada, been destined by Meerun for assassination. To effect his purpose, Meerun invited him to an interview which the foujdar promised to give him; but "he was a prudent man,"

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Immediately after the conclusion of the treaty with the Dutch, Colonel Calliaud arrived from Madras, and he was forthwith dispatched with a considerable force to Moorshedabad, where in a few days he was joined by Clive and Colonel Forde. Both these distinguished commanders were about to quit India. Clive introduced Colonel Calliaud to the Nabob, and recommended him to his confidence; but it has been justly said that "confidence is a plant of slow growth," and Meer Jaffier regarded the approaching departure of Clive with much alarm. He disliked the control which Clive had exercised over him, but he felt the want of his fertile and active mind to guide him through his difficulties. These were neither few nor slight. Invasion threatened him from without, while within, an exhausted treasury, a discontented soldiery, and an oppressed people, afforded abundant grounds for apprehension. In addition to the anxiety generated by these sources of annoyance, Meer Jaffier was subjected to constant fear of the consequences which might arise from the wayward and extravagant conduct of his son Meerun. More especially did he dread that, in conformity with the many precedents which Oriental

says the native historian, Gholaum Hossein (who seems to think the adoption of measures to guard against assassination an extraordinary display of prudence), and instead of proceeding at once to meet Meerun, he dispatched a message to Clive, representing his fears and soliciting protection. Clive assured him of safety, and obtained for him permission to decline the interview sought by Meerun, which the foujdar was still unwilling to risk notwithstanding Clive's guarantee.

history affords, the prince might take some measures to quicken the natural course of the succession to the throne. The pride of Meer Jaffier had sometimes revolted at the interference of Clive, and circumstances had occasionally led him to cherish the thought of emancipating himself from his control; but when difficulty arose, he felt himself incompetent to meet it. The storm never failed to revive that dependence which the calm had dissipated. Weak, timid, indolent, and indecisive, Meer Jaffier looked to a stronger mind than his own for counsel, and the loss of Clive was felt by him as the removal of the mainstay of his throne and safety. CHAP. VI.

It was not by the Nabob only that Clive's departure was regarded with apprehension: many of the Company's servants augured ill of the results. The Nabob was surrounded by persons inimical to the interests of the English, and the influence of their counsel, it was feared, might shake to its foundations the fabric which the genius of Clive had raised. These views were pressed upon him with much earnestness, but his determination was taken. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of the Court of Directors, and the state of his health had long dictated retirement. After passing a few days at Moorshedabad, Clive returned to Calcutta, whence, in the month of February, he departed for England. The A.D. 1760. mode of supplying the vacancy thus occasioned had been the subject of violent and vehement disputes at home. A detail of these is unnecessary, and would be uninteresting. It will be sufficient to

CHAP. VI. state, that the continuance or abandonment of the rotation system formed one point of dispute; and when that was disposed of by a resolution of the Court of Proprietors, enforcing a return to the former practice under which the presidential authority was intrusted to a single person, a fresh contest arose on the choice of an individual for the office. An order of succession was finally carried, under which Mr. Holwell* was the fifth on the list; but by the death or departure of those above him, he had attained the first place when Clive left India, and consequently succeeded to the office which Clive's withdrawal vacated.

A. D. 1760. Colonel Calliaud had, on the 18th January, marched from Moorshedabad for Patna, accompanied by Meerun, with an army which was in point of numbers formidable. The advance of the force was delayed by the necessity of previously appeasing the Nabob of Purneah, in order that an enemy might not be left in the rear. This being, to appearance, effected, through the mediation of the English commander, the march of the army was resumed. The prince against whom it was advancing was the same who has already been mentioned as the Shazada, but he now claimed a

* He was at Calcutta when the place was attacked by Sooraj-oo-Dowlah; and by the flight of the governor and most of the senior servants, he then succeeded to the chief authority. He was among those confined in the Black Hole, and was one of the few who survived the confinement. He wrote a narrative of the sufferings endured by himself and his companions, which has been referred to among other authorities in the account of that transaction.

higher character. His father had experienced the fate which rank and power so often have brought upon their possessors—the captivity in which he had long been held had been terminated by his murder. Intelligence of this event reached the Shazada soon after he entered Behar, and he therefore assumed the title of Emperor. CHAP. VI.

The governor of Behar, Ram Narrain, was in command of a considerable force, and he had further the aid of a battalion of English sepoys and a few Europeans which had been left at Patna. On the approach of the invading army he marched out of the city and encamped under its walls. Colonel Calliaud was most anxious that an engagement should be avoided until he arrived, and he wrote repeatedly to the governor, warning him not to come to action. Ram Narrain was a good financier, and his arithmetical ability had caused his elevation; but he was a very indifferent soldier, though his vanity led him to entertain a different belief. Anxious to achieve undivided glory, he disregarded the injunctions of Colonel Calliaud, engaged the enemy, and was totally defeated. The efforts of the English troops enabled him, with some difficulty, to retreat into Patna. On learning what had happened, Colonel Calliaud advanced with the greatest expedition, and on the 22nd February a battle ensued, in which the English and their ally obtained a complete victory over the Emperor. The ardent spirit of Colonel Calliaud suggested that the triumph should be followed by pursuit, and he entreated Meerun to give him the A.D. 1760.

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assistance of a small body of cavalry for this purpose—but Meerun refused, and without the aid solicited by Colonel Calliaud no pursuit could take place. On the 2nd March it became known that the Emperor was in full march for Bengal; Colonel Calliaud followed, and on the 7th was within ten miles of him. The Emperor then diverged, to enter Bengal by another route, which lay across mountains which no army had before traversed. His force consisted chiefly of cavalry and was unencumbered by baggage—he also had the advantage of a day's march in advance of Colonel Calliaud—but notwithstanding these circumstances, the latter succeeded in following him at no great distance. On the 4th April he joined Meer Jaffier who was in the field, and on the 6th proposed to attack the enemy in the night if the Nabob would furnish a body of cavalry. He met with the same success which had attended his application for similar assistance from the Nabob's son—the cavalry were refused. On the following day Colonel Calliaud came up with the rear of the Emperor's army, a river only interposing between them. He then renewed his request to the Nabob to march a body of cavalry to employ the enemy till the British infantry could be brought up. The request was disregarded, and the enemy thus gained an opportunity of marching away unmolested. The Emperor returned to Patna, and having been joined by Law, with the remnant of the French force which followed that leader, made two assaults upon the city. He was preparing for a third when he was compelled

to withdraw by the arrival of Captain Knox with a detachment sent by Colonel Calliaud to the relief of the place. The next task which demanded the attention of the English commander was to resist the Foujdar of Purneah, who, not satisfied that he was safe in trusting Meer Jaffier, was again in arms for the purpose of joining the Emperor. Captain Knox left Patna to stop his progress. He was accompanied by the Rajah Shittabroy, a gallant native chief, with a few followers. The rest of the troops in Patna were either occupied in settling important questions relating to arrears of pay, or indisposed to engage in a project which they believed hopeless. One of the principal jemadars endeavoured to deter Shittabroy from accompanying Captain Knox, representing the folly of meeting such a force as that of the Foujdar with a mere handful of men, intimating his suspicion that the defeat of the troops of Ram Narrain would not give their master much concern, as thereby he would save payment of the arrears which were due to them, but adding, that the officers had resolved not to risk their lives by joining the rash and infatuated English.* These sinister anticipations of defeat were not realized. Captain Knox was attacked by the Foujdar, but the latter was defeated, and fled with the loss of the greater part of his baggage and artillery. A few days brought the armies of Colonel Calliaud and of Meerun to Patna. These pursued the flying Foujdar, and having over-

* Scott's History of Bengal, page 396.

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taken him, a skirmish took place, after which the Foujdar continued his retreat, having burned all the heavy baggage and military stores that remained to him. Here again the obstinacy of Meerun rendered success imperfect. Colonel Calliaud had no cavalry, and Meerun, who throughout the action had kept in the rear, would not spare a single horseman for the pursuit. But the follies and crimes of this wretched prince were approaching

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an awful close. On the night of the 2nd of July was a heavy storm. The tent of Meerun, containing himself, a story-teller to amuse his leisure, and a servant employed in patting his feet, was struck with lightning, and all within it perished.* The

* Meerun appears to have possessed somewhat more of energy than his father Meer Jaffier, but this quality was principally manifested in the perpetration of deeds of blood. The native historian, Gholaum Hossein, is very severe on his memory. After attributing to him two acts of assassination, he says "he killed several women of his harem with his own hand, and would boast of the act, saying, 'this was the true mode of clearing up doubts and easing the mind of jealousies.' With this savage ferocity he procured the death of Ameena Begum and Gooseety Begum, daughters of Mahabat Jung (Aliverdi Khan), whom he caused to be drowned; and among his papers was found a list of many persons whom he had resolved to cut off at the conclusion of the campaign, determined, as he said, to rid himself of the disloyal and sit down in repose with his friends." The historian adds, "But the Almighty, who is protector of the universe, would not permit such barbarity. When he beholds a people immersed in wickedness, he commits the guidance of power over them to a tyrant that he may punish their offences; but he lets not that tyrant remain for ever over his servants. The government of the oppressive has no permanency; for the scripture truly says, 'Dominion may continue even with infidelity, but cannot with cruelty.

death of the general is always in the East the signal for the dispersion of his army. To prevent this mis- CHAP. VI.

If, indeed, after necessary severity the cruel become just, he may establish their power; or else, remedying evil by evil, he sends one more cruel than themselves to overthrow their prosperity.' "

Among other acts of like nature, Meerun, soon after the accession of his father to the musnud, took advantage of the disturbances which succeeded that event to spread reports of a conspiracy in favour of an infant, stated by some authorities to have been the brother of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, by others, with greater appearance of probability, the nephew of that prince. The way being thus prepared, a band of ruffians was dispatched to the place where the hapless child was lodged with the widow and daughter of Aliverdi Khan, the latter being Gooseety Begum above-mentioned. It was reported that all three were assassinated; but in this instance Meerun—for the report was spread by himself—laid claim to the guilt of more bloodshed than had actually been committed. The child was murdered, but the women were for the time spared and sent off to Dacca. Meerun, however, seems to have been greedy of the fame of extended murder, and to have guarded his reputation in this respect as jealously as men in general would protect their claim to innocence. Being reproached by Scrafton, the British resident, with the murder of one of the women, he did not repel the charge by alleging, as he truly might, that she was alive, but answered in the tone of one irritated by an attempt to control his just and reasonable liberty of action, " What, shall not I kill an old woman who goes about in her dooly (litter) to stir up the jemadars against my father ? " Orme vol. ii. page 272. To this unhappy prince the broadest and plainest distinctions between right and wrong appear to have been imperceptible. He was either originally destitute of the power of judging between them, or he had lost it by a long course of self-indulgence and self-delusion.

Mr. Vansittart closes a long list of persons cut off by assassination during the reign of Meer Jaffier with the names of Gooseety Begum, Ameena Begum, Murada Dowla, an adopted son of Shahamut Jung, nephew of Aliverdi Khan, Lestfin Nissa Begum, the widow of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and her infant daughter, after which the narrator continues thus :—" The five unhappy sufferers men-

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fortune, and to avert the confusion and plunder by which it would inevitably be attended, it was resolved to conceal from the army, if possible, the fact of Meerun's death. A few of the most trustworthy and influential of the officers were entrusted with the secret, and through their assistance the army was kept together during its march back to Patna, return thither being rendered necessary by the approach of the rainy season, not less than by the fatal accident which had left the troops of the Nabob without a leader. The disappearance of Meerun was ascribed to illness, and during seven days, which the march to Patna occupied, the real cause was unknown, except by the few to whom it had been imparted in confidence. When the knowledge of the prince's death became general, the troops took advantage

tioned last perished all in one night at Dacca, about the month of June, 1760, where they had been detained prisoners since the accession of Jaffier Ali Khan to the government. A purwannah [order] was sent to Jessarut Khan, the naib [deputy] of Dacca, to put to death all the survivors of the families of the Nabobs, Aliverdi Khan, Shahamut Jung [his nephew and son-in-law], and Sooraj-oo-Dowlah; but upon his declining to obey so cruel an order, the messenger, who had private instructions to execute this tragedy in case of the other's refusal, took them from the place of their confinement, carried them out at midnight upon the river, and massacred and drowned them, with about seventy women of inferior note and attendants." This account is incorrect and exaggerated. Gooseety Begum and Ameena Begum were brought from Moorshedabad to Dacca some time after Meer Jaffier's accession; and further it was officially stated by the Government of Bengal (Letter to Court of Directors, 1st October, 1765), that of the five principal victims named above, only two had perished, the rest had been kept in confinement, and were subsequently set at liberty.

of the consternation excited by it, and became clamorous for their arrears of pay. They surrounded the palace and assailed the officers of the treasury, —reviled the Nabob in language the most gross and opprobrious, and even threatened him with death if their demands were not complied with. The storm raged throughout two days, when peace was restored through the interposition of Meer Cossim, the son-in-law of Meer Jaffier. The Nabob gave a promise of full payment at a specified time, and Meer Cossim became security for its performance. Meer Cossim contributed still more effectually to calm the excited feelings of the mutinous troops, and put an end to the violence in which they found expression by producing from his own treasury three lacs of rupees, the distribution of which had the effect of inducing the discontented soldiers to retire.

It was about this time that Mr. Vansittart arrived from Madras to assume the office of Governor of Fort William in place of Mr. Holwell, by whom it had been held since the departure of Clive. As the appointment of Mr. Vansittart interfered with the pretensions of the senior servants in Bengal, he could scarcely hope to enjoy his elevation without annoyance. He soon found that the disappointment of his colleagues was not the only cause of disquiet which awaited him. The man who had been placed on the throne of Bengal by the arms of the British Government was surrounded by enemies, secret and avowed—his pecuniary difficulties were great and increasing —his fidelity had long been more than question-

able, and the death of his son Meerun had now opened a new fountain of discord in a controverted succession. That event, too, had added to the previous incapacity of Meer Jaffier for government. The blow falling on a man habitually indolent and unstable, somewhat advanced in years, and enervated by a life of indulgence, produced such a degree of dejection as seemed to unfit him altogether for the exercise of any function requiring the slightest degree of mental exertion. Clive, whose vigorous mind had formerly held in captivity the weaker intellect of Meer Jaffier, was away; and at the time when the ruler of Bengal most wanted a monitor and guide, there was no man on the spot possessing sufficient influence to assume the character with effect. This was not all. The new governor took possession of a treasury so exhausted that the trading investments of the Company were obliged to be suspended, and it was with difficulty that the current expenses of the settlement were provided for. The monthly subsidy for the payment of the Company's troops while in the field in the service of the Nabob was, like all similar engagements of that prince, considerably in arrear, and had it been paid with regularity it would have been insufficient for the expenses which it was intended to defray. Certain countries had been assigned for a stipulated time to the English, to afford them the means of recovering the losses sustained on the capture of Calcutta. The time of assignment had expired, but a considerable balance

still remained due. The Nabob demanded the restitution of the lands, and offered as security for the outstanding amount some jewels. These could only be made available as a resource in pecuniary difficulty by sale or mortgage, and the circumstances under which they were to be held by the British Government would, for a time at least, forbid recourse to such means of conversion. No remittances were made from Europe for the purposes of the Company, an implicit reliance being placed on the vast wealth believed to have been acquired by the recent changes in Bengal, and the government of Calcutta were expected to provide not only for their own necessities, but also for the wants of Madras and Bombay. At the former presidency an army was in the field, engaged in a course of operations which, if successful, would destroy the last remnant of French dominion in India. This army could not be maintained but at a heavy expense; and the cost of defending the British interests throughout India had been improvidently cast upon the resources of a single settlement.* Such was the

* The expenses incurred by the altered position of the Company, and the inadequacy of the resources obtained by the treaty with Meer Jaffier to meet them, are thus noticed by Mr. Vansittart. "The idea of provision for the future seems to have been lost, in the apparent immensity of the sum stipulated for compensation of the Company's losses at the capture of Calcutta. The expenses of Bengal and the coast, the sums for carrying on the Company's trade at both places, and a provision likewise for the China trade, all was to be paid out of this fund, at first thought inexhaustible, but in less than two years it was

CHAP. VI. financial position of the government of Calcutta, and it was the parent of the policy which that go-

found necessary to take up money at interest, although large sums had been received besides for bills upon the Court of Directors.

"To state this account right, the sum for compensation should be set against the past losses of the Company, and in truth it will not more than repair them. If we examine further the consequences of this event, we shall find that, from a commercial body founded upon a system of economy, we are become from this moment a military and political body; we have entered into connections with the country Government; we have begun a fortification upon an extensive plan, to render our influence and command permanent and secure against all accidents; we have taken upon us the defence of the provinces, and our expenses will be daily increasing by an augmentation of sepoys and other country forces, by larger demands of troops from England, with constant supplies of artillery and military stores proportionate to our present engagements and views, and lastly, by the purchase of materials and pay of workmen for carrying on the new fort.

"To answer all which, it is stipulated in the treaty, that whenever the Nabob demands the assistance of the English, he will be at the charge of the maintenance of the troops; which charge it was afterwards agreed should be computed at the rate of one lac of rupees per month, to be paid by the Nabob during the time the army should be actually in the field. This would barely pay the immediate field expenses of the army; it did not at all take in the increase of the military establishment in general, which heavy expense, when the troops were in garrison, fell entirely upon the Company; nor was any provision made for the extensive fortifications, and the vast charge of military stores both at home and abroad.

"Any stock which is to suffer continual drafts must soon be exhausted, if not kept supplied by some adequate source of annual revenue. The lands round Calcutta, ceded by the ninth article of the treaty, yielded only five or six lacs per annum net income to the Company, a sum of no consideration upon our present enlarged system; and of course we shall see in the middle of the

vernment pursued. Meer Cossim, the son-in-law of Meer Jaffier, aspired to succeed to the throne. The money which he had advanced to allay the claim of the mutinous army had been furnished upon the condition that he should stand in the place of Meerun. Meer Jaffier had indeed two other sons, and the deceased prince had left one, but none of them were of an age to maintain their claim to the succession. That of Meerun's son was weakened, if not destroyed, by the death of his father prior to attaining the throne*; and all the three, it has been

year 1760 the Company's affairs in all parts distressed to the last degree for want of money."—Narrative, pp. 21 to 24.

* The doctrine of representation, as it is termed, is not admitted by the orthodox interpreters of Mahomedan law. This appears from the following passage from Sir William Macnaghten's "Principles and Precedents of Mahomedan Law:"

"The only rule which bears on the face of it any appearance of hardship is that by which the right of representation is taken away, and which declares that a son, whose father is dead, shall not inherit the estate of his grandfather together with his uncles. It certainly seems to be a harsh rule, and is at variance with the English, the Roman, and the Hindoo laws. The Moohummudan doctors assign as a reason for denying the right of representation, that a person has not even an inchoate right to the property of his ancestor until the death of such ancestor; and that, consequently, there can be no claim through a deceased person, in whom no right could by possibility have been vested."—Preliminary Remarks, pages 8, 9.

In another part of the same work the principle is thus stated: "The son of a person deceased shall not represent such person, if he died before his father. He shall not stand in the same place as the deceased would have done, had he been living; but shall be excluded from the inheritance, if he have a paternal uncle. For instance, A, B, and C are grandfather, father, and son; the father, B, dies in the lifetime of the grandfather, A; in this case

CHAP. VI. alleged, laboured under the disqualification of illegitimacy. Circumstances thus conspired to favour the pretensions of Meer Cossim, who was, moreover, so fortunate as to obtain the support of the British Government. The way had been opened for the recognition of his claims before the arrival of Mr. Vansittart. Mr. Holwell had for some time been bent upon effecting a change in the government of Bengal. His plans were communicated to Mr. Vansittart almost as soon as he arrived; and all of praise or of blame that belongs to the latter, in respect of the transactions that followed, rests upon his having adopted and carried out the plans of his predecessor. He who had laid the snare was judged the most

the son, C, shall not take *jure representationis*, but the estate will go to the other sons of A."—Principles of Inheritance, General Rules, Chap. I. Sec. I.

The following case occurs in the "Precedents of Inheritance:"

"*Q.* A woman has two sons, one of them dies in the lifetime of his mother, leaving a daughter; after the woman's death that daughter lays claim to the property left by her, in right of her father. Will her claim be good against the brother of her deceased father: that is to say her uncle?

"*R.* The daughter can have no claim against her uncle, because her father died in the lifetime of his mother, who has another son living, by whom the daughter is excluded. She can, therefore, have no claim of inheritance to the property of her grandmother."—Chap. I. Case IX.

The Schias or Imameeya sect adopt a different view; but, as Sir William Macnaghten observes, their code "has hitherto had no weight in India, and even at Lucknow, the seat of heterodox majesty itself, the tenets of the Soonees are adhered to." In a case of recent occurrence, the succession to the throne of Oude was determined according to the orthodox code, which rejects the doctrine of representation.

proper person to manage the process by which the prey was to be inveigled within it. Mr. Holwell, notwithstanding he had ceased to be governor, continued to correspond with Meer Cossim. The latter, indeed, occasionally addressed letters to Mr. Vansittart; but the more free and confidential revelation of his desires and hopes was reserved for Mr. Holwell. A sufficient understanding having thus been established, it was judged proper that a closer communication should take place. The permission of Meer Jaffier for Meer Cossim to visit Calcutta was obtained, under the pretence of its being necessary for arranging a plan for the next campaign against the Emperor, and for effecting a settlement of certain accounts. Here, again, Mr. Holwell was the principal actor. At the express desire of Meer Cossim, that gentleman was deputed to confer with him; and the aspiring candidate for the throne of Meer Jaffier opened his views with a degree of candour which somewhat startled his English friend.* That he should seek to possess himself of all the substantial power of the sovereign was expected—that he should even claim to enjoy the title was not improbable—but Meer Cossim, it appeared, looked to securing his seat on the throne by the death of him who then occupied it; and though the British negotiator does not appear to have been a very scrupulous person, he was not prepared to concur in a premeditated assassination. His delicacy astonished and disconcerted Meer Cossim, who expressed

* Holwell's India Tracts, pp. 90, 91.

CHAP. VI. his fear that Mr. Holwell was not so much his friend as he had supposed. But this trifling mishap was not suffered to interrupt the progress of the negotiation. Meer Cossim had little hope of achieving any part of his object but by the assistance of the English; and, after some debate, the basis of a treaty was agreed upon. Meer Cossim was to be invested with the dewanny, or control of the exchequer —a most important power. He was, further, to exercise all the executive authority; but Meer Jaffier was to continue in possession of the title of sovereign: all affairs of government were to be transacted in his name and under his seal, and a suitable revenue was to be allotted for his support. Such were the arrangements affecting the actual and the nominal sovereign. For his own government, Mr. Holwell stipulated for the possession of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong, as means of defraying the Company's charges in maintaining the throne of Bengal. The terms were immediately communicated to the select committee, and by them unanimously approved. A few days afterwards a formal treaty was signed by the British authorities and Meer Cossim; and the arrangement being completed, nothing remained but to communicate it to the man whose power had been thus summarily transferred to one of his servants. Mr. Holwell, who seems to have been in great favour with the governor, was requested to undertake this task, but he assigned various reasons for declining it, the most prominent, and probably the most influential,

being that it would have placed him in subordination to Colonel Calliaud, with whom he was to be associated. The conclusion of the treaty with Meer Cossim was the last official act of Mr. Holwell. He immediately afterwards resigned the service. CHAP. VI.

On Mr. Holwell declining to be a party in the mission to Meer Jaffier, the governor resolved to undertake it himself. It was anticipated that Meer Jaffier would be slow in assenting to a scheme by which he was virtually dethroned; and that no means of persuasion might be wanted, it was prudently arranged that Mr. Vansittart and his coadjutor should be attended by a considerable military force. On the 14th October the English diplomatists arrived at Cossimbazar, and on the following day the governor received a visit from the Nabob. On both sides there was an appearance of friendly feeling. Mr. Vansittart expatiated on the evils of Meer Jaffier's government, and the Nabob expressed himself willing to abide by any advice which the English governor might offer with a view to improvement—certainly not anticipating the nature of the advice which he was soon to receive. Other interviews succeeded, and three notes were addressed by Mr. Vansittart to the Nabob, the last of which recommends the appointment of some capable person from among "the Nabob's children" to retrieve the affairs of the state; but so far from containing any intimation of the bargain which had been made with Meer Cossim, it does not even advert to that disinterested and high-minded person A.D. 1760.

CHAP. VI. as being fit for the duty required. The plot, however, gradually advanced to its development. The unceasing representations made to the Nabob of the disorders of his government, and the continued calls of the British authorities for reform, at length extorted from him a confession that age and grief incapacitated him for struggling alone with his difficulties. This furnished an opportunity for recurring to the recommendation to seek assistance from his relations. The Nabob thereupon mentioned several, and among them him for whose name the British representatives were anxiously listening—but their joy on hearing it pronounced was not suffered to overcome their discretion — instead of giving to Meer Cossim the suspicious testimony of their praise, they asked the Nabob which of the persons whom he had named was the most fit to assist him. Again the voice of the prince delighted his hearers. Meer Cossim had some reputation for ability, and the Nabob without hesitation declared him to be the fittest man to lend him aid. The English negotiators now thought that they might give expression to their wishes without imprudence; they suggested that the man of the Nabob's choice should be sent for. The satisfactory progress which the negotiation had appeared to be making was here interrupted. The rapidity with which the English wished to proceed was disagreeable to Meer Jaffier, who had indeed no wish to proceed at all; he for some time refused to comply, but yielding at last from weariness rather than from any other cause, he defeated the

object of the English by intimating before Meer Cossim's arrival, that fatigue rendered necessary his own departure. Meer Cossim was scarcely more anxious for an interview than his rival. He came on the summons addressed to him, but he was under an apprehension, possibly not ill-founded, that instead of trusting him with the management of the state, the Nabob would take measures for getting rid of him. The following day passed without any communication with Meer Jaffier, and it was determined at night to resort to force to carry out the views of the English. The necessary preparations were made with great secresy. Colonel Calliaud, with his troops, joined Meer Cossim without exciting alarm, and marched into the outer court of the palace without meeting interruption. There the colonel formed his men, and before making any attempt against the gate of the inner court, which was shut, dispatched to the Nabob a letter which had been prepared by the governor. The letter expressed some disappointment at the silence of the Nabob throughout the day, denounced the advisers to whom he had surrendered himself, and informed the prince that the English government had sent Colonel Calliaud with a military force "to wait upon" him. The duty of the colonel was explained to extend to the expulsion of Meer Jaffier's evil counsellors, and the Nabob was exhorted to receive and support him—to look upon the governor as his sincere well-wisher, and to "remain satisfied." But Meer Jaffier was not satisfied. The letter threw him into a transport of

CHAP. VI. rage, and he threatened that he would resist to the last and abide his fate. Colonel Calliaud abstained from hostility, leaving opportunity for time to work a change in the Nabob's mind. He was not disappointed. After an interchange of messages occupying about two hours, Meer Jaffier was content to stipulate only for the preservation of his life and honour, and an allowance suitable to his maintenance. These being readily granted, the desponding prince came out to Colonel Calliaud, whose troops took possession of all the gates of the palace. Mr. Vansittart hastened to the spot as soon as apprized of the result. On seeing him, Meer Jaffier, whose apprehensions were not yet altogether allayed, demanded if his person were safe. The governor answered that not only was the person of the Nabob safe, but his government also, if he so pleased, adding that it had never been intended to deprive him of it. The courtesy of the latter part of this answer is more evident than its veracity: Meer Jaffier however was unmoved by it. Aware that Meer Cossim was to be put in possession of all actual power, Meer Jaffier attached little importance to the honour of being called a sovereign. With far more spirit than might have been expected, he declined the name when stripped of the authority of a prince, and asked permission to retire to Calcutta. He set out the same evening. Meer Cossim was seated on the musnud, and the congratulations tendered him by the English authorities were followed by those of the principal natives, offered with all the sincerity which is commanded by success. By the

evening all was perfectly quiet, and a stranger might have entered Moorshedabad without suspecting that the city had that day been the scene of a revolution.*

Meer Cossim had fully expected that he was to purchase the dignity of Nabob by a liberal donation to those who had helped him to attain it. This was quite in conformity with Oriental precedent; and the example of Clive and his associates in the previous transfer of the government of Bengal had shewn that Englishmen had no objection to follow it. On the night on which the articles were signed, Meer Cossim had tendered to Mr. Vansittart a paper which, on examination, proved to be a note for the payment of twenty lacs of rupees to the members of the select committee. But either that body happened to be in the mood for indulging the feeling of disinterested patriotism, or the abruptness with which the offer had been made gave it, in their eyes, an appearance of indelicacy. They, one and all, shrunk from the polluted paper, and desired their president to inform the man whose grossness had shocked their moral feelings, that "he mistook their motives." The obtuseness of Meer Cossim led him to repeat the offer, when, to save him from utter despair, Mr. Vansittart was induced to promise, on the part of himself and his coadjutors, that when the affairs of the country were settled, and its finances flourishing, they would accept such marks of the prince's friendship as he might be pleased to bestow. The governor took this opportunity of so-

* Vansittart's Narrative, vol. i. pp. 105 to 158.

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liciting a donation of five lacs of rupees for the Company, which was promptly granted, and applied by the English government in aid of the operations against Pondicherry. The promise which the pertinacity of Meer Cossim had extorted from the committee was faithfully kept; and although it will be an anticipation of the course of events, it will be more convenient to state the manner of its fulfilment here than to return to the subject when, in the order of time, it would require to be noticed. A few months after the elevation of Meer Cossim, Mr. Holwell consented to receive two lacs and seventy thousand rupees, Mr. Sumner two lacs and twenty-four thousand rupees, Colonel Calliaud two lacs, Mr. M'Guire one lac and eighty thousand rupees and five thousand gold mohurs.* Mr. Culling Smith, who was secretary to the committee, had one lac and thirty-four thousand rupees; and Major Yorke, who commanded the detachment immediately attendant on Meer Cossim, benefited to the like extent. Mr. Vansittart, as was befitting his station, had the largest share of Meer Cossim's bounty—five lacs of rupees were appropriated to his personal use. These payments were to be deferred till the Nabob's finances were in a condition to bear them. When they became the subject of Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Sumner was questioned as to the circumstances of the country at the time when they were made. His answer was, that "it was a matter he supposed the Nabob a proper judge of;"—a reply indicating a

* A mohur is equal to sixteen rupees.

most decorous respect for the rights of a sovereign prince, and a laudable desire to avoid any impertinent interference in his affairs.* CHAP. VI.

The reader being satisfied that the select committee did not work without reward, it will now be proper to resume the narrative at the point where it was interrupted for the purpose of illustrating this fact.

The dethronement of Meer Jaffier, and the elevation of Meer Cossim in his place, had been effected with a degree of ease which could scarcely have been looked for. But those by whom the work had been performed were not to enjoy the pleasure of success without alloy. The change had been prepared and effected solely by the select committee. In a matter where secresy was essential, it was not extraordinary that this should have been the case, and precedent did not require that the opinion of the entire council as then constituted should be taken. But those members of the council who were not members of the select committee were, nevertheless, displeased, and various motives probably combined to give rise to their displeasure. Mr. Vansittart had been brought from Madras to take the chief place in the government of Calcutta, to the prejudice of Mr. Amyatt, the next in succession to the chair, and to the dissatisfaction of all below him. The governor complained that he "had some unhappy tempers to deal with," and

* See Evidence of Colonel Calliaud and Mr. Sumner, in First Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1772.

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that "there were mischievous people in the settlement who were busy in improving every circumstance to inflame disputes." He alleged further, in explanation of the hostility which he encountered, that some appointments which he had made had given offence.* There might be another reason. When Mr. Vansittart relieved Meer Cossim from the fear that his proffered liberality would be altogether declined, by promising that at a future time the select committee would yield to his wish to be generous, he made no such promise on the part of the remaining members of the council. In the bargain with Meer Jaffier, though the select committee obtained the larger share of the price of that prince's elevation, the other members of council were not forgotten. Mr. Vansittart, indeed, was not authorized to promise any thing except for the members of the select committee, and he might be withheld from referring to his absent associates by the fear of giving them offence. It is certain, however, that they were passed over, and the superior fortune of their brethren of the select committee was noticed some months afterwards with considerable bitterness.† All these causes might contri-

* Narrative, vol. i. pages 159—160.

† In a letter to the Secret Committee of the East-India Company, dated 11th March, 1762, signed by several of the malcontents, the following is the paragraph relating to the charge. "After what has been set forth, we believe few will imagine that Meer Jaffier was deposed by reason either of a want of ability to rule, or of his bad principles. We would willingly, indeed, suppose that it proceeded rather from the want of a true knowledge

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bute to raise or to feed the opposition which Mr. Vansittart encountered; but apart from the influence of private feelings, there was quite enough in the transactions of which he was the chief manager, though not the chief contriver, to justify a strenuous resistance to his policy.

That Meer Jaffier was a weak man is unquestionable, and it is not less certain that he was a wicked one. But neither his weakness nor his wickedness were left to be discovered by the new president of the council of Calcutta — abundant proofs of both had long been afforded. Both had been shewn at the very moment when the British Government were striving to place him on the musnud. He who could pledge the most solemn oaths of fidelity to a sovereign of whose throne

of the country policy, and from an error of judgment, than from lucrative views, had not Mr. Vansittart and others of the projectors made no secret that there was a present promised them by Cossim Ali Khan of twenty lacs. 'Tis true they make a merit that this was not to be delivered till the Company's debt was paid and his army satisfied. We have to observe on this occasion, that several of us have had offers from the Nabob of very considerable sums to join in his measures, which we have constantly made public as well as refused; and if we, who have always opposed those measures, have been thus tried with pecuniary temptations, what may be concluded of those gentlemen who have supported the Nabob on every occasion?"

It is not improbable that the writers of the above had, as they allege, been placed in the perilous position of finding themselves not at liberty to close their hands on money which was within their grasp. They evidently regard with veneration their own heroism, under the "pecuniary temptations" with which they had been "tried," and seem almost astonished at their having found strength to resist them.

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he was about to take possession could scarcely be regarded as a pattern of moral excellence; he who could hover inactively about the field where raged the battle which was to bring him regal power or total ruin could not be possessed of much energy or determination of purpose. His failings and crimes after his good fortune triumphed had been many and great—but not more numerous or more grievous than might have been anticipated when his success was at issue. Mr. Vansittart incurred the needless labour of framing a memorial, setting forth the crimes of Meer Jaffier; but it is to be remarked that these crimes were not urged to Meer Jaffier as the grounds of his removal. The complaints submitted to him related to the state of the country and the ill conduct of his ministers. Further—while there was quite enough in the character of Meer Jaffier to shock the feelings of humanity, it ought not to be forgotten that the person who, under Mr. Vansittart's patronage, was elevated to his place, was desirous of commencing his reign with the murder of his predecessor—the father of his wife.*

* A just, but somewhat coarse adage, suggests the importance of a good memory to those who give loose to the inventive faculty; and a more striking illustration of its truth can scarcely be found than in comparing the different statements with regard to the charge referred to in the text made in two pamphlets, both published by Mr. Holwell. In one, entitled "An address to the Proprietors of East-India Stock, setting forth the unavoidable Necessity and real Motives for the Revolution in Bengal in 1760," he gives an account of an interview which he had with Meer Cossim, in furtherance of the object of the revolution. Professing to give the substance of what Meer Cossim said, his report cor-

Besides the general bad character of Meer Jaffier, certain specific acts were alleged in justification of CHAP. VI.

cludes thus, Meer Cossim being the speaker referred to:—"Closing this introduction with saying that the Soubahdar (Meer Jaffier) was incapable of government; that no faith or trust could be put in him; and that if he was not taken off it would never be in his [Meer Cossim's] power to render the Company those services which he had so much at heart." Thus far Meer Cossim. Mr. Holwell, who speaks in the third person, then proceeds to give an account of the effect of this proposal on himself. "Mr. Holwell, who little expected a preliminary of this kind, expressed much astonishment and abhorrence at the overture, and replied: 'That howsoever little the Soubahdar deserved consideration, yet that the honour of the Company and the English name forbid our hearkening to any attempt against his life or *dignity*—[The object of the conference being to effect his deposal virtually, if not ostensibly]—that care would be taken neither he nor his ministers should in future have power either to injure him [Cossim], the Company, or his country, in the manner he had already done, but that unless he (Cossim Ali Khan) dropped all mention, as well as every intention and attempt of the measure he had intimated, the conference must end there.' To this he acquiesced, but with evident dissatisfaction of countenance, and only added, that as he had no support but the English, he must submit to their measures, but feared Mr. Holwell was not so much his friend as he hoped and expected." This is one of Mr. Holwell's statements. The other is taken from a pamphlet bearing the title of "Mr. Holwell's Refutation of a Letter from certain Gentlemen of the Council of Bengal to the Honourable the Secret Committee, serving as a Supplement to his Address to the Proprietors of East-India Stock," the latter being the pamphlet just quoted. In this second, or supplementary pamphlet, the following passage occurs:—"As to Cossim Ali Khan being desirous of assassinating Meer Jaffier, it is a charge we much doubt the truth of, as we never before heard the fact mentioned"! Both these pamphlets, with others on Indian affairs, are contained in one volume, "Holwell's India Tracts;" the first extract, that giving an account of Meer Cossim's desire to assassinate Meer Jaffier, will be found at pages 90, 91, the second

CHAP. VI. his removal from the throne. His conduct in regard to the attempts of the Dutch was put prominently forward by Mr. Holwell;* but this, though it might have afforded some reason for breaking with the Nabob at the time, had been overlooked by the British Government; and Meer Jaffier had no ground to expect that it was at a future period to assist in making out a case for deposing him. Again —the Nabob was accused of carrying on secret correspondence with the Emperor, which was true. It was alleged that the object of the Nabob was to throw the blame of opposing the Emperor upon the English, and to make separate peace for himself. The character of Meer Jaffier casts no discredit on this statement; but on the other hand, the papers attributed to him are said to have been forgeries, and

denying all knowledge of such a desire, at page 114. It may not be unnecessary to mention, that in the letter of the non-conforming part of the council the charge against Meer Cossim runs thus:—"This was the case in most of the instances alleged against Jaffier Ali Khan, none of which shew greater proofs of cruelty than that which Cossim Ali Khan discovered when, *being in possession of the palace,* he was desirous of making the first act of his power the assassination of Jaffier Ali Khan therein, and was very much displeased when he found we intended to give him protection at Calcutta." It is just possible that Mr. Holwell might have proposed to shelter himself under the plea that he knew of no such design being entertained by Meer Cossim after he had possession of the palace—if such a defence were meditated, it can only be pronounced a miserable evasion, wanting nothing of the scandal of positive falsehood. But Mr. Holwell's language does not entitle him to the benefit of this subterfuge, wretched as it is. His words amount to a disclaimer of all knowledge of Meer Cossim's meditated guilt.

* Letter to Colonel Calliaud, 24th May, 1760.

the known character of Oriental diplomacy offers no impediment to such a belief. The precise nature and the precise object of the correspondence are uncertain, and upon grounds so vague and unsatisfactory it did not become the British Government to act.

There was yet another point which, though not of primary importance, Mr. Holwell condescended to notice, as warranting a renunciation of the cause of Meer Jaffier. The government of Bengal acknowledged, in words at least, a dependency on the throne of Delhi. Meer Jaffier had been confirmed by the former Emperor and enjoined to aid in opposing his son; but that son was now Emperor, and the position of Meer Jaffier became that of rebellion. The sensitive conscience of Mr. Holwell recoiled from "drawing the sword against the legal though unfortunate prince of the country;"* a remarkable instance of respect for the tottering throne of Aurungzebe, seeing that the permission of the Emperor had not been sought for the dethronement of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and that the meditated removal of Meer Jaffier was to take place without any arrangement with the imperial court as to a successor. In the best days of the empire the power of the monarch had often been defied by those who called themselves his servants—the sword had frequently been unsheathed against him by whom it was bestowed, and in whose service only it was to be employed — the measure of the Emperor's

* Letter from Mr. Holwell to Colonel Calliaud, 24th May, 1760.

CHAP. VI. strength was the measure of his dominion. At the time when Mr. Holwell's scruples so opportunely occurred, the actual power of the Emperor was next to nothing. The throne of the Moguls was the sport of servants and strangers, and he who was entitled to occupy it was a wanderer without a home.

But to combat these alleged reasons for removing Meer Jaffier is to combat phantoms. Those by whom the revolution was contrived and effected had no faith in them. They were paraded to give a colour of right to an act which at best could be justified only on the ground of expediency, and of which even the expediency was very questionable. If these reasons were thought to possess any weight, they should have been communicated to Meer Jaffier, and publicly avowed as the grounds on which the British Government acted in removing him. They were not so communicated or avowed ; and though it was determined for other reasons to deprive Meer Jaffier of all substantial power, it was proposed that he should retain the name and receive the homage of a sovereign. His flagrant cruelties, his perfidy to his ally, his rebellious resistance of the authority of his master the Emperor, were to be accounted nothing. The Nabob and his load of guilt were to repose under the wing of British protection, and though the actual administration of the affairs of the state was to be placed in other hands, it was to be carried on in the name and under the authority of the culprit. He was to enjoy all the credit to be

derived from the countenance of the British Government, and that government to incur all the discredit which must attach to the support of a sovereign who was deemed unfit to reign.* Such was the design, at least the professed design, of the select committee. Its execution was frustrated by Meer Jaffier himself—or apparently it was so frustrated—for it cannot but seem strange that, in the treaty executed by the British Government with Meer Cossim, the latter, possessing at that time no political power whatever, should agree to surrender to the English certain lands—an act which indeed could

* Warren Hastings, afterwards so conspicuous in the history of British India, was at this time resident at the court of Meer Jaffier. In a letter to Mr. Holwell, dated 21st June, 1760, he adverts to the massacre of the women at Dacca, already referred to in connection with the character of Meerun, on whom the native historian lays the guilt of the transaction. In conclusion Mr. Hastings says, "I have hitherto been generally an advocate for the Nabob, whose extortions and oppositions I imputed to the necessity of the times and want of economy in his revenues; but if this charge against him be true, no argument can excuse or palliate so atrocious and complicated a villany, nor (forgive me, Sir, if I add) our supporting such a tyrant." It is not necessary to determine whether Meer Jaffier or his son had the greatest share in the guilt of this massacre, but with reference to the closing remark of Mr. Hastings, and to the proposed arrangement for allowing Meer Jaffier to retain the dignity of a sovereign after he should be deprived of the power, it may be observed, that as, according to the views sometimes professed by the British authorities, he was divested of power not merely on account of his inaptitude to govern, but for reasons affecting his character as a man no less than as a prince, they were bound in consistency with those views to withdraw from him every appearance of encouragement and support.

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scarcely be regarded as within his ability after the principal object of the treaty had been accomplished, inasmuch as during the life of Meer Jaffier, the power of Meer Cossim was to be only administrative. Nor can it fail to excite surprise to find, in an agreement with a private person, such a clause as the following: "Betwixt us," the English and Meer Mahomed Cossim Khan, "a firm friendship and union is established: his enemies are our enemies, and his friends our friends." Indeed the inconsistencies which mark the whole proceeding are extreme. The character of Meer Jaffier deprives him of all claim to sympathy, but regard to the honour of the British name calls for an indignant condemnation of the course taken with respect to him. Contemplated merely on the ground of expediency, it is scarcely entitled to greater favour. There was little reason to hope that Meer Cossim would on the whole prove either more honest or more tractable than Meer Jaffier, and a revolution, though happily a bloodless one, can scarcely be deemed a legitimate mode of relieving a temporary pressure for money.* On an

* The possible disappointment of the hopes entertained from a revolution is pointed out with some force of reasoning and some vigour of language by Colonel Calliaud in a letter to Mr. Holwell, dated the 29th May, 1760. Speaking of Meer Jaffier, he says, "Bad as the man may be whose cause we now support, I cannot be of opinion that we can get rid of him for a better, without running the risk of much greater inconveniences attending on such a change than those we now labour under. I presume, the establishing tranquillity in these provinces would restore to us all the advantages of trade we could wish for the profit and honour of our employers, and I think we bid fairer to bring that

extended view of even the most worldly policy, it is evident that a few lacs of rupees could not compen-

tranquillity about by our present influence over the Soubahdar, and by supporting him, than by any change which can be made. No new revolution can take place without a certainty of troubles, and a revolution will certainly be the consequence whenever we withdraw our protection from the Soubahdar. We cannot in prudence neither, I believe, leave this revolution to chance; we must in some degree be instrumental in bringing it about. In such a case it is very possible we may raise a man to the dignity, just as unfit to govern, as little to be depended upon, and in short as great a rogue as our Nabob, but perhaps not so great a coward, nor so great a fool, and of consequence much more difficult to manage. As to the injustice of supporting this man on account of his cruelties, oppressions, and his being detested in his government, I see so little chance in this blessed country of finding a man endued with the opposite virtues, that I think we may put up with these vices, with which we have no concern, if in other matters we find him fittest for our purpose."

Notwithstanding the opinions here avowed, Colonel Calliaud subsequently concurred in the deposition of Meer Jaffier. When questioned before the Parliamentary Committee in 1772 as to the reasons of the change, the best which he could offer appeared to be his confidence in Mr. Vansittart's judgment. Col. Calliaud was a very distinguished soldier, but he appears to have been deficient in moral firmness, and this defect in his character had previously led him to the commission of an act which cannot be pronounced other than dishonourable. While Col. Calliaud was engaged with the Nabob and his son in opposing the Emperor, a letter was exhibited by Meer Jaffier, the writer of which offered to secure the person of the Emperor or to cut him off, on condition that a reward of a lac of rupees and the administration of certain lands should be secured to him under the seals of the Nabob, his son, and Colonel Calliaud. That a British officer should become a party to such a bargain would scarcely be credited—but such was the fact. Colonel Calliaud entered into the project, and his seal was affixed to a document, which was to secure to an assassin his price. The excuse of Colonel Calliaud was, that he believed the letter to be a forgery contrived by Meer Jaffier to test the friendship of

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sate for the instability which such a step entailed upon all the institutions of the country, and the loss of character which the English Government sustained by its apparent breach of good faith.

Money being the sole object of the revolution, Meer Cossim applied himself vigorously to the replenishment of his treasury. The relations and dependants of former princes, as well as those who had acquired wealth by ministering to their pleasures, were severely pressed. The demands of Meer Cossim were not confined to those enriched by his immediate predecessor: the retrospect extended to the reign of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and even to that of Aliverdi Khan. The mandate to refund reached some who had long since renounced the dangerous and uncertain struggle for courtly favour, and had retired to the enjoyment in security, as they supposed, of the portion of wealth which, by the use of means of various grades of respectability, they had been enabled to accumulate. "In short," says the native historian,* "the advice of Zaidee, the poet, 'Why collectest thou not from every subject a grain of silver that thou mayest form a treasure?'

the English authorities, and that in this belief he thought his concurrence in the plan might promote his interest with the Nabob without endangering the life of the Emperor. But the apology is very insufficient. He could not be assured that he was not becoming a party to assassination; and even if he had been certain of that, which was only matter of conjecture, his appearing to countenance so atrocious a scheme brought disgrace upon the nation and service to which he belonged.

* Gholaum Hossein: see Scott's History of Bengal, page 404.

Meer Cossim had attentively listened to and now strictly followed." But his course was not perfectly smooth. The Emperor was only about fifty miles from Patna. His standard offered a rallying point to the discontented zemindars and petty rajahs, and all were discontented when called upon for payment of revenue. It had been part of the projected policy of Mr. Vansittart to make terms with the Emperor, but the execution of it was interrupted by the necessity of immediately removing this source of inconvenience. Major Carnac had taken the command of the British army at Patna on the 1st January. On the 15th he gave battle to that of the Emperor, when the latter was entirely defeated. Among the prisoners taken were M. Law and his remnant of French followers. This success prepared the way for negotiation. Major Carnac solicited permission to visit the Emperor in his camp. The overture was after some hesitation accepted, and the British commander finally conducted the Emperor to Patna. This commencement of friendly intercourse between the Emperor and the English was regarded by Meer Cossim with jealousy, and on hearing of it he lost no time in proceeding to Patna. There he was solemnly invested by the Emperor with a khelaut, or dress of honour, and acknowledged his confirmation in the soubahdarship by undertaking to render an annual tribute of twenty-four lacs of rupees from the revenue of the three provinces.*

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A.D. 1761.

* On this occasion the conduct of Meer Cossim displayed either unreasonable fear or unbecoming haughtiness. Being

CHAP. VI. This ceremony performed, there was nothing which Meer Cossim so much desired as the absence of his lord, and he was soon gratified. The English, though disposed to support the Emperor, were unable from various causes to favour him to the extent of their wishes, and his departure was accelerated by an insurrection in his camp, in which he would probably have perished but for the timely interposition of Major Carnac.* He marched in the direction of Oude, where he was to be met by the ruler of that country, who held the office of his vizier.

One ground of jealousy and dispute between Meer Cossim and the English was thus removed, but others were not wanting, and a demand made by Meer Cossim upon Ram Narrain for a settlement of accounts was a fertile source of difference, and eventually of mischief.

Ram Narrain was a wily Hindoo, who having been raised by Aliverdi Khan to the rank of governor of Patna, had contrived to maintain himself there contrary to the wishes of Meer Jaffier, who distrusted him. That prince, on the ground that Ram Narrain would put faith in an English promise, but not in his own, had solicited Clive to

prepared to acknowledge himself the Emperor's vassal, and to receive from his hand a confirmation of his own authority, it was undoubtedly his duty to wait upon his lord. But Meer Cossim refused to proceed to the camp of the Emperor, and after much negotiation the investiture took place in the English factory, where a throne was erected for the purpose.

* Evidence of Major Carnac, Third Report of Select Committee, page 102.

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write to him, assuring him of the English protection, in order, as the proposer of the scheme did not hesitate to avow, that he might get possession of his person and cut off his head. Clive answered, that such a proceeding would not be consistent with the customs of the English ;—that if the Nabob was inclined to resort to arms to reduce Ram Narrain to obedience, he was ready to assist him ; but that if he made any promises, they must be fulfilled. Meer Jaffier, who possessed no superabundance of energy, preferred a peaceful course, even though shackled by the disagreeable condition of fidelity to a promise. Clive accordingly wrote to Ram Narrain, telling him that if he would present himself to the Nabob and acknowledge the authority of the new establishment, he should be continued in the government of Patna, on the terms under which he had held it from Sooraj-oo-Dowlah. Ram Narrain complied, tendered his submission, and was accordingly confirmed in his appointment. When the Shazada first menaced Patna, Ram Narrain exercised a prudent care to stand well with both parties in the war till he could ascertain which was likely to prove the stronger. At a subsequent period his ambition to display his zeal and military skill was near producing fatal consequences to the cause in support of which it was indulged.* His accounts, like those of most Oriental financiers, were considerably in arrear, and Meer Cossim demanded a settlement. The demand was evaded, and Meer Cossim thereupon formed designs

* See pages 366 and 383.

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hostile not only to the power, but to the life of Ram Narrain.

The resources of the province of Behar had suffered greatly from its being the scene of war; and it has been questioned whether Ram Narrain was really indebted to the Nabob at all. The presumption, however, lies the other way. If nothing were due, it could have been shewn by producing the accounts; but these neither threats nor persuasion could extort. The influence of Mr. M'Guire, chief of the English factory at Patna, was employed, but in vain. Ram Narrain sometimes promised the accounts, but when the time for their production arrived, none were forthcoming. Had the accounts been rendered, and had they been fair and honest, Meer Cossim might not have relaxed in his hostility to Ram Narrain, but the withholding them clearly put the latter in the wrong; and the pertinacity with which his conduct was defended by the officers who successively held the chief military command at Patna, can only be accounted for by their dislike of the policy which placed Meer Cossim on the throne, and their unfriendly feelings towards those by whom it had been adopted.*

* Major Carnac could see no fault in Ram Narrain; and Colonel Coote, by whom he was succeeded, took the same view. The former stated that Ram Narrain declared he was ready to account. He might have declared his readiness to account, but during several months, though constantly called upon, he did not account. He sometimes alleged that part of the accounts had been lost during the war, and must be supplied from recollection; but those accounts which it was not pretended were lost, did not ap-

Nothing could be more unhappy than the state of feeling which prevailed among the different authorities in Bengal. Mr. Vansittart was naturally disposed to support Meer Cossim, the Nabob of his own creation, but he was not disinclined to protect Ram Narrain if he would comply with the demand of rendering an account. Meer Cossim, however, was, perhaps from the beginning of the dispute, but certainly soon after its commencement, bent upon the destruction of Ram Narrain, and he offered large bribes to both Major Carnac and Colonel Coote to induce them to aid his purpose. Those officers, however, seem to have determined not only to protect Ram Narrain from injustice and violence, but to uphold him in resisting every claim upon him, however just and reasonable. They were consequently involved at once in disputes with the Nabob and with the British council, in which the president had a majority. With the former they were sometimes on the brink of positive hostility, while the correspondence between them and their official superiors was disgraced by the most bitter and unbecoming altercations. The disputes were terminated by the recall of Colonel Coote and Major Carnac to Calcutta: the command of the military force which remained at Patna was entrusted to Captain Carstairs, but its employment was to be entirely at the disposal of the chief of the factory. Those

pear any more than the rest. The probability is, that the pretence was false. See Evidence and Letter of Mr. M'Guire, in Third Report.

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who had stood between Ram Narrain and ruin being thus removed, Meer Cossim proceeded to avail himself of an opportunity which he had long coveted. Accounts were again demanded, and Ram Narrain having no longer any hope from evasion, some were rendered. They were unsatisfactory to the Nabob, and had they been perfectly accurate and just they would still have been unsatisfactory. It was declared that embezzlements to a vast amount were detected: the person of Ram Narrain was seized and his effects confiscated. This in the eyes of Meer Cossim was but an instalment of justice. The treasurer of the culprit and his banker shared the fate of their employer. All his dependents were subjected to amercement, and thus, as Gholaum Hossein observes, "the Nabob acquired a great treasure."* As might be expected, Ram Narrain was eventually murdered. In this unhappy series of transactions, none of the parties concerned can be acquitted of blame, though they are involved in very different degrees of criminality. The objects of Meer Cossim were first extortion and subsequently revenge. Ram Narrain, on his part, obstinately refused compliance with a well-founded claim for an account, and was determined that no portion of the wealth which had passed into his hands, as

* Scott's History of Bengal, page 409. A different account is given by Mr. M'Guire, who says Ram Narrain compromised with the Nabob by the payment of fifty lacs. Such a mode of arrangement appears to have been proposed (see a letter from Mr. Hay to Mr. Vansittart in Third Report, page 330), but it was not carried into effect.

deputy of the province, should find its way into the coffers of his chief. The military authorities at Patna erred in not confining their protection to the person of Ram Narrain, and in affording encouragement to his avarice and dishonesty. The governor and council erred no less grossly, and still more fatally, in withdrawing from the person of Ram Narrain that protection which the continued countenance of the British government for several years entitled him to expect. Meer Cossim confided in the support of the chief civil authorities—Ram Narrain in those who held the chief military command, and both were thus encouraged to persevere in doing wrong. The military forgot the duty of implicit obedience to the government under which they were instructed to act, in their aversion to the policy pursued by that government.* The governor and council, not unreasonably, indignant at the tone assumed by men whom they had a right to command, petulantly vindicated their authority by an act which surrendered a helpless man to the mercy of a ruthless tyrant. Such were some of the fruits of that injudicious and unjustifiable policy which had treated the sovereignty of Bengal as a commodity for barter.

* A minute recorded by Mr. Vansittart the 22nd September, 1761, contains the following passage, the justness of which cannot be questioned:—"The president observed, that no service can be carried on where there is more than one authority; if an officer is to be the judge of the orders he receives from the board, the execution of those orders will depend on his judgment, and not on the judgment of the board."

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The governor and council had asserted their authority, and Meer Cossim was in possession of his prey; but peace was not thereby secured. Fresh sources of dispute and disturbance arose before the former were well dried. Shortly before the departure of Clive, a dispatch had been addressed by the Calcutta council to the Court of Directors, complaining in no measured terms of the asperity with which some part of the conduct of that council had been noticed. By the Court the dispatch was regarded as so offensive as to call for the dismissal of all those who had signed it, and orders to that effect were sent out. In addition to Clive, the offensive letter was signed by Messrs. Holwell, Pleydell, Sumner, and M'Guire. Clive was in England before these orders were dispatched, and Mr. Holwell had resigned the service before their arrival in India; their only effect, therefore, was to remove from the service, and consequently from the council, Messrs. Pleydell, Sumner, and M'Guire. All these were supporters of Mr. Vansittart's policy, and their removal gave his opponents a majority in council. One consequence of this change (an "additional misfortune," Mr. Vansittart calls it*) was the appointment of Mr. Ellis, one of the most vehement of the governor's opponents, to be chief of the factory at Patna. Here he was not long before he entered upon a course of acts equally disagreeable to the Nabob and the English governor. A complaint was preferred by a servant of the English factory

* Narrative, vol. i. page 291.

against one of the Nabob's officers, for obstructing the transit of some opium duly authorized to pass. The military force at Patna was to act under the directions of the chief of the factory, and Mr. Ellis ordered Captain Carstairs to seize the person whose conduct had given offence. But military subordination at that time sate lightly, and Captain Carstairs, instead of obeying the order, which, whether judicious or not, Mr. Ellis had an undoubted right to give, contented himself with transmitting a statement of the complaint to the Nabob, accompanied by a request that he would reprimand the offender and release the opium. "The forbearance of Captain Carstairs," says Mr. Vansittart, "made no difference in Mr. Ellis's intentions;"* and it was not to be expected that it should. The only effect likely to be produced on the mind of Mr. Ellis was to irritate him by the obvious contempt with which his authority was threatened. Captain Carstairs indeed not only evaded the performance of his own proper duty, but in addressing the Nabob on the subject without instructions, trespassed on that of Mr. Ellis. Other causes of dispute soon occurred. The Nabob complained of the conduct of one of the Company's servants in Purneah: Mr. Ellis retorted by complaining of those of the Nabob in the same district. At the same time an Armenian in the Nabob's service, who had been detected in purchasing some saltpetre, of which the Company possessed a mono-

* Narrative, vol. i. page 299.

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poly, was seized by Mr. Ellis, and sent in irons to Calcutta. The council, however, acted with more forbearance than the Company's representative at Patna; they refrained from adding to the violence which had already been offered, and sent the Armenian prisoner back to Patna, with a request that the Nabob would punish him.* Another opportunity for the exercise of that power which Mr. Ellis was in nowise indisposed to exert soon occurred. It was reported that two English deserters had taken refuge in the fort of Mongheer. Mr. Ellis applied

* According to Mr. Vansittart, some members of the council were of opinion that the offender should be publicly whipped, and Mr. Johnstone suggested cutting off his ears as a good method of expressing the displeasure of the council. In a letter addressed by the Nabob to Mr. Ellis on this occasion, he says: "I have just received intelligence that you have sent a large force and carried off a collector of the government, who was at Punchmahla, in the districts of Mongheer. If that person had committed any fault, it would have been proper to have informed me of it, since my interests and the Company's are united. It ill became you to seize an officer of my government who was entrusted with affairs of great consequence, and then to desire a letter to Shere Ali Khan. [The purpose of the desired letter was to secure free passes for the Company's goods in Purneah.] Since my servants are subjected to such insults, my writing can be of no use. You are the master—send for any of my officers, zemindars, tahsildars, or foojedars, where and whomsoever you please. How much my government and authority are weakened by these proceedings I cannot describe." There is certainly some reason in the Nabob's remonstrance, and some force in the taunting request that the British chief will send for his officers since he is the master; but Meer Cossim had, in effect, acknowledged that the English were masters of the country, when he consented to receive from their hands a kingdom previously in possession of one to whom he owed allegiance.

to the Nabob's deputy in Patna for an order to the commander of the fort to give them up, or suffer a search to be made for them. The request not being complied with, Mr. Ellis dispatched a party of British sepoys to enforce his wishes. The sergeant claiming admittance to the fort was answered by a warning to keep out of reach of the guns, or otherwise he would be fired upon. The party thereupon withdrew, but remained within sight of the fort for about three months. At length a search was granted. No deserters were found; but this certainly does not prove that the fort harboured none at the time when Mr. Ellis received his information: abundant time and opportunity had been afforded for their escape. An invalid Frenchman, however, who had been in the fort some months, and who was tempted by the offer of reward to reveal all that he knew on the subject, declared that he had never seen a single European there.

"Things," says Mr. Vansittart, "could not stand long upon the point to which they were now brought. Every word and action of the Nabob's was construed into a declaration of a design against the English, and particularly from the chief and council at Patna suggestions of the kind were frequent; whilst, on the part of the Nabob, every ordinary motion of ours was represented to him in such colours as would most add to his apprehensions of our intending to break with him." To endeavour to restore confidence in the mind of the Nabob, the governor proposed a special mission, to be entrusted to Mr.

CHAP. VI. Hastings. The council consented; but when his instructions were under consideration, it was proposed to add to them a clause directing him to apply to the Nabob for payment, for the use of the Company, of the twenty lacs of rupees offered by him to the governor and other persons engaged in concluding the treaty with him. This was strenuously resisted by Mr. Vansittart; and his resistance was reasonable, although the interest which he had in the question precluded his obtaining credit for purity of motive. The proposal for the additional instruction was undoubtedly factious, and its effect could scarcely be expected to aid the object of the mission—conciliation; but the private feelings of the governor's enemies overcame their sense of public duty, and they succeeded in carrying their motion.*

* The minutes recorded by the supporters of the demand evince great delicacy of feeling on the subject of presents. Mr. Amyatt, in proposing that the money should be brought to the credit of the Company, assigns as a reason, that if distributed among the members of the Board, it "could not fail of raising a suspicion that our assents to the revolution were bought." Mr. Johnstone took the same view; he thought that, as the promise to pay this sum was given in consequence of services to be rendered by the representatives of the Company, and by their power and influence, it might be considered the Company's due; "otherwise the proceedings of their servants in the advancement of Cossim Ali Khan would be liable to the suspicion that their intentions were other than those they have declared;"—a suspicion which Mr. Johnstone, it appears, could not bear should be incurred even by men whom he hated. Major Carnac was "of opinion the demand proposed to be made to the Nabob by Messrs. Amyatt, Johnstone, and Hay, of the twenty lacs, ought to be done, were it only in justification of themselves: for, however innocent the gentlemen of the Board may be, the world probably imagines

The answer of the Nabob to the demand was sufficiently decisive; it was contained in a written paper delivered by him to Mr. Hastings. He said, "By the grace of God I have completely fulfilled the

that they have all received some pecuniary consideration in return for having appointed Cossim Ali Khan to the soubahdarry; whereas from this demand being made, the contrary will appear on record." Mr. Amyatt, the originator of the proposal, had shared in the wealth so liberally showered by Meer Jaffier on those who aided in his elevation, and of this Mr. Vansittart did not fail to remind him in the following passage in one of his minutes. "The demand now proposed tends to aggravate that uneasiness [the Nabob's] instead of removing it. I hope such is not Mr. Amyatt's view in making the proposal, but it is hard to conceive from what motive it can have proceeded. Certainly it is not from pure regard to the Company, nor from any conviction of the justness of the claim, for he never thought of offering the Company what he received of the Nabob Jaffier Ali Khan's present to the council and committee, nor ever gave it as his opinion that the Company had a right to it." Mr. Amyatt's reply to this, while aiming to establish a distinction between the two cases, suffers the real motive to the proceeding to become apparent. "Now it is not to be imagined that he [the Nabob] would have offered so large a sum to these gentlemen [Messrs. Vansittart, Calliaud, Holwell, Sumner, and M'Guire], *to the exclusion of the other members of council* and select committee (an offer before unprecedented), but as a consideration to engage them to conclude with him a treaty from whence he was to reap so much advantage, without regarding the opinions of the rest of the Board. As, therefore, they could have no right to receive money upon such terms, and Mr. Amyatt is willing to believe they have not, if they thought proper of themselves to sign a treaty on the part of our honourable masters, the consideration for so doing ought to be paid to those who were to be the only losers, in case of ill consequences arising thencefrom. The parallel between the present received by Mr. Amyatt, *in common with the whole Board,* as well as with the army and navy, and this of twenty lacs, *intended for five gentlemen only,* is as unjust as it would be to make a parallel between the two

CHAP. VI. treaty, and have not in a single instance deviated from it. Yet, gentlemen, notwithstanding this treaty you solemnly made with me, and ratified with the seal of the Company, you now demand a sum of money from me which I have never borrowed of you, nor obliged myself to pay, nor have you in any manner the least claim upon me. I owe nobody a single rupee, nor will I pay your demand."

A.D. 1762. While engaged on this mission, Mr. Hastings took occasion to call the attention of the government to certain abuses connected with trade, which were perpetrated under the authority of the British name and flag. The Company had long enjoyed the privilege of carrying on their trade clear of customs duty, but this immunity was well understood to be confined to goods imported or exported by sea: such, in fact, was the only trade in which the Company had ever engaged. The internal trade of the country was in the hands of the natives. The exclusive right of dealing in some articles was claimed by the government, and by being farmed was converted into a source of revenue. All other articles, in accordance with the absurd and vexatious system then universal in the East, were subjected to duties levied at various stations, so that goods could scarcely be removed at all without rendering their owner liable to make some payment

revolutions,—the one established in consequence of the overthrow of a common enemy, the other in direct breach of the former engagements,—the act of only part of the council, and to which, had all the members been consulted, the majority would probably have objected."

to the state, and could not be transferred to any considerable distance without subjecting him to many such payments. The influence acquired by the English from the revolution in Bengal encouraged the servants of the Company to enter on their private account into the internal, or what was called the country trade. At first, they appear to have paid duties, but before long they claimed the privilege of carrying on their trade free. As between traders burdened with the payment of heavy duties and those who paid none, no competition could be maintained, it was obvious that the ultimate and not very distant result of the course taken by the Company's servants must have been to throw all the trade in the country into their hands, and it was equally obvious that the virtual abolition of both transit duties and monopoly profits, which must accompany the change, would be seriously felt in the Nabob's treasury. Both prince and people, therefore, were interested in opposing the claims of the English. The assertion of those claims on the one side, and the resistance offered to them on the other, gave rise to innumerable disputes. Each party accused the other of resorting to violence. The Nabob complained that the illegal trade was upheld by the exercise of force—the residents at the English factories alleged, that even the lawful trade of the Company was interrupted by the Nabob's servants—and on both sides there was some truth. Mr. Vansittart was well disposed to abate these evils, but he possessed no influence with his

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council, and was moreover inclined to regard the period of five or six years, during which the Company's servants had been largely engaged in the private trade, as having given to their claim to retain it something of the force of prescription.* Thus, powerless in his own government, and not fully prepared to exercise power had he possessed it, he applied himself to bring about a compromise; and in the hope of effecting this object, he proceeded to Moorshedabad to try whether his personal influence with the Nabob were greater than it was among his own countrymen. He found the prince greatly incensed but not altogether intractable, and a body of regulations for the government of the inland trade was agreed upon. The main provision related to the amount of duty to be levied, which was fixed at nine per cent. to be paid on the first moving of the goods, and no further demand was to be made either during transit or at the place of sale. Most of the other provisions were directed to the suppression of abuses, the existence of which could not be denied. Had this arrangement been adhered to, it is probable that neither party would have had much reason for dissatisfaction; but by the cupidity of one of the parties, between whom the governor stood as a mediator, and the precipitancy of the other, the good effects which its author had anticipated were frustrated. It had been agreed

* "I was unwilling to give up an advantage which had been enjoyed by the Company's servants in a greater or less degree for five or six years."—Vansittart's Narrative, vol. ii. page 143.

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to postpone the publication of the regulations till after the arrival of Mr. Vansittart at Calcutta, when copies of them were to be transmitted from the council to the different factories, accompanied by the orders of the Nabob, with which the governor was furnished. Slow as for the most part is the progress of business in the East, the prospect of pecuniary advantage sometimes quickens it wonderfully. The tardy process by which the regulations were to be carried into effect accorded not with Meer Cossim's impatience to realize the gratifying vision of a nine per cent. duty, and he resolved to anticipate the proposed communication from Calcutta. Scarcely had Mr. Vansittart left him, when he dispatched to all parts of the country copies of that gentleman's letter embodying the proposed regulations; the Nabob's officers were ordered to act upon them, and all English gomastahs or agents who refused obedience were to be turned out of the country. The regulations being received at Dacca, the council of the English factory there lost no time in transmitting them to Calcutta with a letter of remonstrance against the new plan. This missive found the minds of the council well prepared to ensure its effect. They had previously informed their president that the subject required consideration, and that they had consequently ordered his communication to lie on the table till his return. The news from Dacca converted dogged discontent into active hostility. The council forthwith resolved that their president, in concluding the agreement

CHAP. VI. with Meer Cossim, had assumed a right to which he was not entitled; that the regulations were dishonourable to Englishmen, and tended to the destruction of all public and private trade; that the president's conduct in acting independently of the council was an absolute breach of their privileges; that the regulations should be resisted; and that the absent members of council, excepting such as were at an inconvenient distance, should be immediately called to Calcutta, that the whole might be consulted on a matter of such "high consequence,"—for thus did they characterize a measure which the chief and council of the factory of Dacca had represented as affecting "all" their "privileges," all their "fortunes and future prospects."*

In this spirit did Mr. Vansittart's colleagues meet his views of accommodation. Whether or not he was empowered to make a final arrangement, is a point which seems not to have been clear even to himself;† but it is quite certain that the motives of his European opponents were entitled to no respect, and for the hasty and ill-judged enforcement of the regulations by the Nabob he was in no way account-

* Vansittart's Narrative, vol. ii.

† At page 141 of the second volume of his Narrative, he refers to certain words used by the council in transmitting to him an extract of a letter as evidence of his authority to make a full settlement; the words are, "which [the extract] we imagine may be of service to you in finally settling these matters upon a solid plan." But at page 253 he says, "I was much displeased with the Nabob for his eagerness in making use of my letter as a final agreement."

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able, that step having been taken in violation of a positive agreement. The spirit in which it was followed was calculated to add to the existing troubles and embarrassments, and as an amicable arrangement was previously a matter of great difficulty, it now became almost hopeless. "The views of the violent party in Calcutta," says Mr. Vansittart, "were but too well seconded by many of the Nabob's officers."* Armed as they were with their master's authority, and, as they supposed, with that of the English governor, they not only executed their duties in the most offensive manner, but proceeded to use their newly acquired power for other purposes than the protection of the revenue. These abuses gave rise to fresh complaints from the factories—complaints the more difficult for the president to deal with because they had some foundation in justice. In this state of things the resolution of the council for convening a full board was carried into effect. The number assembled (including two military officers, whose right to attend, except on the discussion of military questions, the president disputed) was twelve. Excepting the president and Mr. Hastings, all were of opinion that the Company and its servants had a right to carry on the inland trade duty free, but some indulged a spirit of liberal concession so far as to be willing to pay a trifling duty on certain articles. A string of questions relating to the various points in dispute was prepared, and at a subsequent meeting of the board answered in the

* Narrative, vol. ii. page 254.

CHAP. VI. following manner. The first question demanded "Whether the firman (or patent) granted a right to trade in all articles customs free?" Ten of the council voted in the affirmative, Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Hastings being the only dissentients. The second question was, "Whether any customs should be paid on some articles?" salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, being the articles contemplated. Seven members of council voted the affirmative of this question and five the negative. The third question related to the mode of carrying on the inland trade. Mr. Vansittart had proposed that the Company's dustuck (or pass) should be granted only for goods imported by sea, or intended for exportation by sea—in other words, the Company's passport was to cover only the Company's trade; the private trade of the Company's servants was to be protected by the dustuck of the officer of the country government granted at the place where the duty should be paid. The question proposed to the council was, "Whether the Company's dustuck should be granted for the inland trade?" One member declined to vote, nine voted in the affirmative, and two only in the negative. The fourth question had originally stood thus: "Whether certificates should in future be granted to any but the Company's servants?" but in consequence of the decision on the second question, that duties on certain articles should be paid, it was put in the following form: "As it is determined that duties shall be allowed on certain articles, whether certificates shall be granted to those who pay that

duty but are not Company's servants?" Six voted in the negative upon this question, and as the two military members of the board abstained from giving any opinion, only four voted in the affirmative; but it is somewhat strange that among the four the name of the president appears. The remaining questions were, "Whether the English gomastahs (or agents) should be subject to the control of the officers of the country governments; and if not, how disputes between them and the governments should be settled?" On these all the members of the board, except Mr. Hastings, were of opinion that the English agents should not be under any actual control of the officers of the country governments, but be restrained by such regulations as might be laid down. Other questions were proposed for answer on a future day, the object of which was to ascertain on what articles duty should be paid, and what should be its amount. Some of the answers were so vague, that the course adopted by the Calcutta government on a former occasion might have been followed—what were called opinions might have been voted no opinions at all. Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Hastings adhered to their former view, that nine per cent. should be paid on all articles without exception. Mr. Amyatt thought all articles should be equally taxed, but that the duty should be only two per cent. Most of the members were for confining the payment of duty to salt, and one, Mr. Batson, was willing to include tobacco. Finally, it was determined that salt only

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should be subjected to duty, and that the amount should be two and a half per cent. The resolutions of the board on this subject, with others subsequently passed for regulating the conduct of the gomastahs, were conveyed to the Nabob in a letter from the governor; but some of his enemies insisted upon the insertion of a paragraph, explaining to the Nabob that the authority of the English government was vested in the entire council, and that the governor on such occasions was only the channel of making known their will. As a further annoyance to the governor, it was proposed also to demand from the Nabob the return of Mr. Vansittart's letter assenting to the former regulations for the private trade. Both points were carried. These proceedings can only be characterized as factious and mischievous. They tended to diminish the influence of the governor in native politics, already shaken by the refusal of the board to confirm the arrangements into which he had entered for regulating the private trade, to embarrass the mind of the Nabob as to the actual seat of the British authority, to convince him that the English government was divided within itself, and thus to encourage him to presume upon the weakness likely to result from such a cause. The return of Mr. Vansittart's letter was unnecessary, because its provisions were to be superseded by others of later date; and the formal assertion of the rights of the council was a virtual, if not a positive violation of the orders of the Court of Directors, that all correspondence with the native powers should be carried

on by the governor alone. Literally the orders were obeyed, for the governor alone signed the letter; but their spirit was disregarded by an intimation that the duties of the governor were little more than to register the decrees of the council and carry them into effect.* CHAP. VI.

Meer Cossim, anxious to adorn his newly-acquired crown with the wreaths of conquest, had been engaged in an expedition against Nepaul, but his success was not equal to his confidence, and in place of gaining, as he had hoped, both glory and wealth, he returned under the shame of defeat. Almost the first news that greeted him was that of the members of council being summoned from the outlying factories to take part in the consultations at Calcutta; and he seems to have inferred from this unusual proceeding, that it was in contemplation to make provision for his immediate descent from the throne. He next learned that his orders for carrying into effect Mr. Vansittart's regulations were disregarded at the English factories, and that until orders from the council were given, obedience would not be yielded. He complained heavily of these grievances in various letters addressed to Mr. Vansittart, and his complaint led to the extraordinary determination of the board to enlighten him on the

* One member, Mr. Johnstone, proposed at once to set the orders of the Court at nought. He moved, that the letter should be signed by the board, and sealed with the Company's seal, not the president's. A sense of decency prevented the acquiescence of his colleagues in this proposal, and the letter was signed and sealed in the usual manner.

CHAP. VI. extent of their powers in relation to those of the governor. While affairs were in this unsettled state, serious affrays took place at Dacca and other places. The council of Patna employed a military force in the defence of their trade, and made one of the Nabob's collectors prisoner. The Nabob dispatched a body of horse to release him, but arriving too late to effect their object, they attacked a party of British sepoys in charge of some saltpetre at Tagépore, killed four and made prisoners of the rest, with the Company's gomastah. The Nabob, however, feared to countenance this movement, and after reprimanding the gomastah he dismissed all the prisoners. Wearied with a contest which he saw little prospect of terminating with any degree of satisfaction, he now resolved to put in execution a plan which he had previously threatened to adopt. He ordered the collection of all customs duties to cease.

This was felt at Calcutta as a death-blow to the profits which the Company's servants had been in the habit of deriving from the inland trade, and of which they had hoped to secure a continuance. It excited an alarm proportioned to the fatal consequences that were anticipated. The council did not wait for an official announcement of the plan, but upon the first rumour of its adoption proceeded to take into consideration its probable effect upon their interests. Such was the real, though not the ostensible, object of the inquiry. It was pretended that the effect of the change would be to prejudice the Company's trade, and that it involved a violation of

the rights of the Company under authority long recognized. No pretence could be more fallacious. The abolition of customs duties, indeed, extended to all other traders the advantage which had been formally conceded to the Company, and which was claimed by the Company's servants on their private account; but practically it could affect only the latter—to the Company's trade it could make no difference. In the management of the inland trade the natives under equal advantages might compete with the Europeans, and probably with a better chance of success, but no native at that time had ever thought of exporting goods to England, or importing any from that country—consequently with the trade of the East-India Company rivalry was out of the question. Yet eight members of council, Messrs. Johnstone, Watts, Marriott, Hay, Cartier, Billers, Batson, and Amyatt, recorded their opinion, that a regard for the interests of their employers compelled them to call upon the Nabob to revoke his determination to relieve the inland trade of his dominions from duties, and to require him, while suffering the servants of the Company to trade on their own account without charge, to tax the trade of his own subjects for their benefit. Selfishness has rarely ventured to display itself under so thin a veil as was believed sufficient on this occasion to disguise it. The president and Mr. Hastings recorded their judgment against their colleagues, but the force of numbers being opposed to them, it was resolved to insist upon the inland trade being again

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subjected to duties, with the exception of so much as the Company's servants might be able to secure to themselves, which by the force of ordinary causes must soon have been the whole. The only mode by which native traders could have been enabled to maintain themselves in their occupations would have been by collusion with the Company's servants; and this was practised to a great extent.*

Before the Nabob's intention to abandon the collection of customs duties was known at Calcutta, it had been resolved that a deputation should be dispatched to explain in personal conference the views of the council, and endeavour to prevail upon the Nabob to adopt them. Mr. Amyatt tendered his services, which were accepted, and at his request Mr. Hay was associated with him. The Nabob shewed some disinclination to receive them, and observed in a letter to the governor, that if the business of Mr. Amyatt was to dispute about cus-

* In the following passage from a letter addressed by the Court of Directors to Fort William, 1st April, 1760, the existence of such practices is referred to as matter of notoriety:—"It is a well-known fact, can be proved abroad, and also in England, that our chiefs at subordinates [subordinate factories] gain full twenty per cent. upon the goods they provide the private trader, and often exclusive of commission; so that the merchant carries his goods to market at an advance perhaps of twenty-five per cent. upon their value in Bengal: the black merchants they apply to our junior servants, and for valuable considerations receive their goods covered with our servants' names: even a writer trades in this manner for many thousands, when at the same time he has often not real credit for an hundred rupees. For the truth of these assertions, we need only appeal to yourselves."

toms, he had better not come, as the point was already settled by the abolition of those duties. But as this was a mode of settlement very distasteful to the majority of the council, it was determined, nevertheless, that the deputation should proceed; and an addition was made to their instructions, requiring them to demand the revocation of the obnoxious immunity. The result of their earlier interviews with the Nabob seems to have been a hope that he would yield to their demands: but he had no such intention; and an opportunity soon offered for manifesting his real feelings. Some boats laden with arms for the British troops at Patna were stopped at Mongheer by the Nabob's guards. Messrs. Amyatt and Hay demanded their release, but the Nabob refused, unless the British force assembled at Patna were withdrawn, or that Mr. Ellis were removed from the office of chief of the factory there, and his place supplied either by Mr. Amyatt, Mr. M'Guire, or Mr. Hastings. While demanding the removal of the troops from Patna, the Nabob was taking measures to diminish their number by holding out to the men inducements to desert. Acts of positive hostility followed; and there being no longer any doubt as to the course which events would take, the presidency began in earnest to make preparation for war. Messrs. Amyatt and Hay demanded their dismissal from the Nabob. It was accorded to the former, but Mr. Hay was detained as a hostage for the safety of some agents of the Nabob, who were in confinement at Calcutta. These

CHAP. VI. events gave opportunity for the commencement of hostilities at Patna. Mr. Ellis, the chief of the English factory there, was not indisposed to the work, nor was he without provocation to enter upon it. The immediate result of a sudden attack upon the city placed it in possession of the English; but unable to maintain the advantage which they had gained, they were driven, not only from the city, but from their own factory; and failing to make their escape, were all either destroyed or made prisoners. Mr. Amyatt, too, was intercepted in his way from Moorshedabad to Cossimbazar, and with all his companions murdered in cold blood.

When it became evident that hostilities with Meer Cossim could not long be deferred, the question, who should occupy the throne, naturally presented itself. With regard to the feelings which actuated the majority of the council, it will excite no surprise to find that they determined on the restoration of Meer
A. D. 1763. Jaffier, and on the 7th July, 1763, a proclamation issued under the seal of the East-India Company declared that personage once more sovereign of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, and invited all persons within those countries to repair to his standard and maintain his claims. The act of the same authority only three years before was thus nullified, and all that had been done for the support of the pretensions of Meer Cossim rendered unavailing. The president offered no opposition to the will of the majority. He consented to sign the proclamation and all other public deeds, with a reservation, that

he did not mean thereby to "prejudice his former declarations and opinions." He could scarcely, however, look back to those declarations and opinions with much confidence in the expediency of the former, or the justness of the latter; he could scarcely refer to them without some feelings of regret, unless the consolation afforded by the five lacs of rupees which they had procured him was sufficient to banish all unpleasant recollections.

When the proclamation restoring Meer Jaffier was issued, the terms upon which his restoration was to be effected were not settled. It was possible, therefore, that the governor and council might have had occasion to recal the act by which they had acknowledged him as sovereign, and transfer the throne to another. Some differences occurred in the arrangement, but they were slight, and the council were not indisposed to yield to the new Nabob in slight matters, seeing that he yielded to them in some points which they regarded as of the highest importance—the native traders were again to be subjected to duties, while the servants of the Company were to carry on trade duty free, with the exception of two and a half per cent. upon salt. Thus, whatever might be the situation of the settled inhabitants of the country, those who sojourned among them for a brief period, for the purpose of amassing as much wealth and with as much speed as possible, had reason to rejoice. In addition to the important provisions respecting the inland trade, the treaty

CHAP. VI. with Meer Jaffier confirmed to the English the possession of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong. The restored Nabob also agreed to maintain twelve thousand horse and twelve thousand foot, and more in case of emergency; to receive an English resident; to enforce within his dominions the receipt of the coinage of Calcutta without batta or allowance; to give thirty lacs of rupees to defray the expenses and losses of the Company from the war and from the suspension of their investment (a measure which had become necessary by the failure of their funds); to reimburse the losses of private persons duly proved before the governor and council; to renew his former treaty with the Dutch, which limited their power of erecting fortifications and raising troops, and to restrain the French, should they ever appear again in the country, from erecting fortifications, maintaining forces, holding lands, or undertaking the management of land rents.

The treaty being signed, Meer Jaffier left Calcutta on the 11th July to join the British force which had been put in motion to effect his restoration to the throne. It was commanded by Major Williams, a king's officer. On the 19th, an engagement took place, which terminated in favour of the English, and compelled the enemy to abandon the fort of Kutwal. On the 24th, the British force stormed the lines of Mootejil, and thus obtained possession of Moorshedabad and about fifty pieces of cannon. Pursuing their victorious course, the English, on the 2nd August, crossed a ravine in the face of the

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enemy, who waited for them on the plain of Geriah, near Sootee. Here a general engagement took place. The battle was obstinately fought, and for a time victory seemed to oscillate between the combatants. At one period the enemy had succeeded in breaking part of the British line and taking possession of some of their cannon; but the advantage was soon recovered, and, after a desperate conflict of four hours, the precipitate flight of the enemy transferred to the English possession of all their cannon, and of one hundred and fifty boats laden with grain. The defeated army fled to Outahnulla, a fort situate between a chain of hills and the river, and defended by an intrenchment, on which were mounted a hundred pieces of cannon. The ditch was deep, about fifty or sixty feet wide, and full of water. The ground in front was swampy, and there was no apparent mode of approach but on the bank of the river where the ground was dry for about a hundred yards; upon this spot the English commenced approaches and batteries, but the design was only to deceive the enemy, and draw off their attention from the point which was seriously menaced. On the 5th September, while the enemy were amused by a false attack on the bank of the river, the real attack was made at the foot of the hills, and after an obstinate resistance on the part of the enemy, attended by great slaughter, the English obtained possession of the fort and cannon. It was said, that Meer Cossim had sixty thousand men in arms within the intrenchment—the English force, Euro-

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The victorious army advanced to Mongheer. This place Meer Cossim had made his capital, and had strengthened it as far as time and circumstances would permit; but, as he had no inclination to sustain a siege in person, he quitted it on the approach of the English, leaving a garrison for its defence. He had previously signalized his temporary residence there by a characteristic act of cruelty, in putting to death several prisoners of distinction, some of them his own relations, of whose fidelity he did not feel entirely satisfied. Among them was the unfortunate Ram Narrain, a victim to his own avarice and the unhappy divisions in the British Government. It is said that he was drowned with a bag of sand fastened round his neck. On the way to Patna, to which place he was returning, Meer Cossim further gratified his disposition for blood by putting to death the two bankers Seit, whom he had some time before compelled to attend him, lest they should give assistance to the English.* Their bodies were exposed, under the care of a guard of Sepoys, to the voracity of beasts and birds of prey, that they might not be disposed of in conformity with the prac-

* Gholaum Hossein is enchanted with the wealth of these unfortunate capitalists. "They could," says he, "pay a bill at sight for a crore of rupees,"—a million sterling. The historian continues, "when, during the first invasion of the Mahrattas in the time of Mahabad Jung [Aliverdi Khan], their warehouses were plundered of two crores, the loss was considered by them as trifling."—Scott's History of Bengal, page 415.

tice of their country; and on the advance of the English army their bones were found secreted in an apartment of a house.

Mongheer was regularly attacked, and, after a practicable breach had been made, capitulated to the English.* The news of this reached Meer Cossim at Patna, and inflamed him to such a pitch of fury, that he resolved on the perpetration of an act of wholesale slaughter, exceeding in enormity even the atrocities of the Black Hole. While the English army were on their march towards Mongheer, he addressed a letter to Major Adams, threatening to put to death his European prisoners, and concluding thus: "Exult not upon the success which you have gained, merely by treachery and night assaults in two or three places, over a few jemadars sent by me. By the will of God you shall see in what manner this shall be revenged and retaliated." He was threatened with the utmost vengeance of the British nation if the prisoners sustained harm; but neither the desperate guilt of the act which was meditated, nor the fearful consequences which might follow to its perpetrator, deterred Meer Cossim from giving orders for its execution. He found a fit instrument in a renegade European named Sumroo.† The prisoners were of course

* Gholaum Hossein ascribes the surrender of Mongheer to the treachery of the governor. The English authorities say nothing of this; but it is worthy of notice that the garrison was two thousand strong, and that the place was surrendered without sustaining an assault.

† This man was a Swiss. "Notwithstanding," says Gholaum

CHAP. VI. unarmed, and in order that this murder might be accomplished with the greater facility, a previous search was instituted for knives and forks, which were seized and sent away.*

A. D. 1763. The 3rd of October was the day of slaughter. Some of the victims were surrounded and fired upon—others were cut to pieces by the swords of the soldiers employed in the dreadful work. It is said that they made all the resistance in their power by throwing bottles and stones at their murderers.† Among the murdered was Mr. Ellis, whose impatience for hostilities had been so conspicuously displayed, and Mr. Hay, who had accompanied Mr. Amyatt on the mission from the English government to Meer Cossim. One Englishman only was excepted from the sentence of general massacre. He was a surgeon, named Fullarton, and the value of his professional knowledge probably was the cause of his preservation. The English prisoners in other places shared the fate of those at Patna. Mr. Fullarton, notwithstanding the favour which had been shewn him, feeling some misgivings as to his own security, succeeded in effecting his escape about three weeks after the slaughter of his companions. It is said that the total number

Hossein, "his being of one of the sects of Christians, he complied with the order of Meer Cossim." The surprise implied by the language of the historian is well justified by the circumstances.

* Fullarton's letter to the board at Calcutta.

† Scott's History of Bengal, page 427.

of Englishmen murdered in various places amounted to two hundred.* CHAP. VI.

Patna, where the principal scene of this tragedy had been acted, was soon to pass out of the hands of the miscreant by whom it had been thus polluted. On the 6th November it was taken by storm, and from this period the fortune of Meer Cossim was decided. His army was pursued by that of the English to the banks of the Caramnassa, which river he crossed to seek refuge in the territories of the Soubahdar of Oude, with whom he had previously concluded a treaty. A.D. 1763.

This campaign was most honourable to the British force and to those by whom it was commanded. Their numbers would bear no comparison with those of the army of Meer Cossim, which a military witness declared to be better appointed and better disciplined than any he had seen in India before.† Meer Cossim, though possessed of little military talent and less courage, had been very anxious to improve his army by the introduction of European discipline, and he had to a considerable extent succeeded.

When Meer Cossim crossed the Caramnassa, the Emperor and the vizier were in camp at Allahabad. Thither the fugitive proceeded, and was honoured

* Evidence of Major Grant in Third Report. Other statements make the number greater.

† Major Grant in Third Report. The witness being asked whether the probability of success was in favour of the English or Meer Cossim, said, that to a reflecting mind it must evidently have appeared in favour of the latter.

CHAP. VI. with a most gracious reception; but the desire of Meer Cossim that the vizier should march against the English was evaded, on the ground that he was about to employ his army in reducing to obedience some refractory dependents in Bundlecund, who had refused payment of revenue; Meer Cossim offered to undertake the task, and his services being accepted, he performed the duty entirely to the satisfaction of the vizier, who on his return to the camp agreed at once to march into Behar in support of the claims of the exiled Nabob. The English authorities had been led, by communications from both the vizier and his master the Emperor, to believe that Meer Cossim would be surrendered, or at least stripped of his wealth and power; but in case of the failure of this expectation, Major Carnac (who had succeeded to the command of the army*) was instructed to advance his army to the banks of the Caramnassa to oppose the entrance of the enemy into the country. Unhappily the services of the army could not be depended upon. A spirit of disaffection had widely spread; some of the troops went off to the enemy's camp, and the fidelity of those who remained was very doubtful. The mutiny was incited and kept alive principally by a body of French troops, which in the exercise of a very questionable policy had been taken into the English service. The

* Major Adams retired, and soon after died. Major Knox held the command for some time after Major Adams's departure, but ill health compelled him to relinquish it, and the command thus devolved on Major Carnac.

quence of the alarm created by the invasion from Oude. Arriving at Calcutta, he lost no time in proceeding with the troops which had accompanied him to Patna. The army previously assembled there, Europeans and sepoys, were in a state of mutiny. Desertions were frequent, and the mutineers soon went to the extent of threatening to carry off their officers and deliver them up to the enemy. Not only did they clamour for payment of a donation alleged to have been promised by the Nabob, but an augmentation of pay was demanded; and the entire force of the British which had been assembled in the neighbourhood of Patna seemed on the point of breaking up. Such being the situation of the army, Major Munro, to use his own words, "determined to endeavour to conquer that mutinous disposition in them before" he "would attempt to conquer the enemy."* In the spirit of this determination, he proceeded with a detachment and four field-pieces to one of the cantonments at a short distance from Patna. On the day of his arrival a battalion of sepoys marched off with their arms and accoutrements to join the enemy. A party, consisting of a hundred Europeans and a battalion of sepoys, whose officers reported that they might be depended upon, was dispatched with two field-pieces in pursuit of the deserters. They came up with them in the night, surprised them while asleep, made them prisoners, and marched them back to the cantonment. The officer commanding the de-

* Evidence before Select Committee, First Report, page 167.

CHAP. VI. tachment sent forward an express, announcing the precise hour at which his arrival with the prisoners might be expected, and Major Munro was prepared to receive them with the troops under arms. He immediately ordered their officers to pick out from the deserters fifty of those who bore the worst character, and who were likely to have been authors of the movement, or chief actors in it. This being done, a further selection of the twenty-four reputed to be the worst men in the fifty was made, and these were immediately placed upon trial before a field court-martial composed of native officers assembled on the spot. They were found guilty of mutiny and desertion, and sentenced to suffer death, the mode of carrying the sentence into effect being left to the direction of the commander-in-chief. He ordered them forthwith to be bound to the guns, and blown away. The order was no sooner made known than four grenadiers represented, that as they had always enjoyed the post of honour, they were entitled to suffer first. Their desire was complied with, the four men bound to the guns were released, the grenadiers fastened in their places and executed. The officers of the native troops in the field then informed the major that the sepoys were resolved not to permit any more men to suffer. He immediately directed the four field-pieces to be loaded with grape-shot, and the Europeans to be drawn up with the guns in intervals between them. The officers who had made the communication were commanded to return to the heads of their battalions, and the men were ordered to

ground their arms under pain of being fired upon in case of disobedience or attempt at flight. The order was complied with—sixteen more of the offenders were blown away, and the remaining four carried to another cantonment where considerable desertion had taken place, there to suffer in like manner. From this time mutiny and desertion were at an end. Such measures can only be justified by strong necessity, and though it is impossible to regard them without a feeling of horror, we must not, under the indulgence of such a feeling, forget the paramount necessity of upholding military loyalty and subordination, and the direful mischief of which an insurgent army might be the cause. CHAP. VI.

The army being once more in a state in which it might be trusted to meet an enemy, Major Munro prepared to take the field as early as possible after the rains; the 15th September was fixed for the rendezvous of the troops from the different cantonments. Before the army was put in motion, intelligence was received that the enemy had advanced several parties of horse, and thrown up some breastwork on the banks of the Soane to impede the passage of the English. To remove this obstacle, Major Champion was dispatched with a detachment and four field-pieces to cross the river some miles below the place where the main body were to pass, and advance on the opposite bank for the purpose of dislodging the enemy and covering the landing of the British troops. It was important that Major Champion should arrive on one side of the river at the same A. D. 1764.

CHAP. VI. time that the main body reached the other. The movements of both parts of the British force were regulated with a view to secure this—and with so much precision were they executed, that Major Champion's detachment began to fire on the enemy at the moment when the van of Major Munro's army appeared on the opposite bank. The enemy was soon dislodged—the English force was thus enabled to cross the river without molestation, and in four hours the operation was completed. Major Munro then continued his march towards Buxar, where the enemy lay. On the 22nd October he arrived there, and encamped just beyond the range of the enemy's shot. He found them intrenched with the Ganges on their left and the village of Buxar in their rear. The first intention of Major Munro was to attack them before day-break on the morning after his arrival. Some spies were sent out to ascertain in what part of their encampment the force of their artillery lay, where the tents of the vizier and Meer Cossim stood, and whether the British artillery could be brought to bear on the enemy's right, Major Munro being resolved to avoid attacking them on their left, in order, said he, "that we might have a better chance to drive them into the Ganges than they should us."* Midnight arrived without bringing back the spies. The British commander concluded that they had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and he resolved to postpone the attack till the following morning. As the day broke, two of the spies returned, and

* Evidence of Major Munro, First Report.

reported that the enemy had been under arms all night, that they had been moving their artillery, and that the women and treasure had been sent away. A *reconnoissance* took place, and many of the enemy's troops were perceived under arms, but not beyond the intrenchments; and it was the opinion of Major Munro and all the officers who accompanied him, that the bustle apparent in the enemy's camp was a feint. "In this belief," said the major, "I returned to our camp, wishing they would come out and attack us, for our army was encamped in order of battle."* His wish was gratified. At eight o'clock the field-officer of the day announced that the enemy's right was in motion, and that he was confident that they were seriously resolved on making an attack. The drums were immediately ordered to beat to arms, the troops advanced from their encampment, and in a few minutes were ready to receive the approaching enemy. The action commenced at nine and raged till twelve, when the enemy gave way. They retired, however, leisurely, blowing up several tumbrils and three large magazines of powder as they went off. The British army broke into columns to pursue; but pursuit was frustrated by the vizier sacrificing part of his army to preserve the remainder. Two miles from the field of battle was a rivulet, over which a bridge of boats had been constructed. This the enemy destroyed before their rear had passed over; and through this act about two thousand of them were

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* Evidence of Major Munro, First Report.

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drowned or otherwise lost. Destructive as was this proceeding, it was, says Major Munro, "the best piece of generalship Shoojah-ad-Dowlah shewed that day; because, if I had crossed the rivulet with the army, I would either have taken or drowned his whole army in the Caramnassa, and come up with his treasure and jewels and Cossim Ali Khan's jewels, which, I was informed, amounted to between two and three millions."*

The British force engaged in this memorable battle consisted of eight hundred and fifty-seven Europeans, five thousand two hundred and ninety-seven sepoys, and nine hundred and eighteen native cavalry, making a total of seven thousand and seventy-two men. They had a train of artillery of twenty field-pieces. The force of the enemy, according to some reports, amounted to sixty thousand men, and the lowest estimate fixes it at forty thousand. Of this vast number two thousand were left dead upon the field of battle, exclusive of those who perished from the destruction of the bridge; the enemy also lost one hundred and thirty-three pieces of cannon of various sizes. The loss of the English in killed and wounded was severe, amounting to no less than eight hundred and forty-seven. The situation of the wounded enemy was pitiable, but they received all the attention which it was in the power of the victors to afford. Surgical assistance could not be rendered, for all that was available was insufficient to meet the wants of the wounded of the

* Evidence of Major Munro, First Report.

English army; but for five successive days the field was traversed in search of those in whom life was not extinct, and rice and water bestowed on all who would receive it. To ensure the due discharge of this humane provision, it was personally superintended by the commander-in-chief, who thus shewed that, although when circumstances required severity he would not shrink from its exercise, he was not less prompt in executing the gentle offices of charity than in enforcing obedience to the demands of military law.

On the day after the battle the Emperor addressed a letter to Major Munro, congratulating him on the victory which he had gained over the vizier, by whom the Emperor alleged he had been treated as a prisoner—soliciting the protection of the English, and adding, that though he had been in camp with the vizier he had left him on the night before the battle. The British army remained several days at Buxar, making provision for the wounded and burying the dead. Major Munro then marched in the direction of Benares. The Emperor marched with his guards in the same direction, and every night pitched his tent within a very short distance of the British encampment. Subsequently to the transmission of the letter, the Emperor had sought an interview with Major Munro, in which he renewed his request for British protection, and offered to bestow in return the dominions of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah, or any thing else which the British Government might please to demand. Major Munro had

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referred the subject to those under whom he was acting, and declined giving any countenance to the Emperor's wishes until authorized by instructions from Calcutta. At length instructions arrived. They were favourable to the Emperor, and he was thenceforward regarded as under British protection. Who that had seen the throne of Delhi at the summit of its power could have anticipated a period, when the lawful successors of those monarchs, to whom myriads of dependent princes bent in lowly acknowledgment of subjection, should be flying with a few guards from the face of one of his own servants, and humbly supplicating protection against him from an officer who held the commission of a sovereign ruling a country of no great extent at the western extremity of Europe? Who that had witnessed the appearance in Bengal of the first party of mercantile adventurers from that country—who that had seen them craving with profound respect, and accepting with deep expression of gratitude, the privilege of carrying on their trade without interruption—had marked their chequered fortune and seen them sometimes fostered and sometimes persecuted, but always anxious to recommend themselves to the favour of the Mogul, could have supposed it possible that an invitation to minister to his imperial pleasure should at first have been coldly evaded—that it should have given rise to doubt, hesitation, and reference for instructions, and should at length have been cautiously yielded, after due consideration, by the servants of the merchant strangers into whose hands had passed,

as though by enchantment, the balance in which were poised the destinies of India and its lord?

The Emperor was not the only person who had reason to complain of the friendship of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah. Meer Cossim had become anxious to enjoy his alliance at a greater distance, and in the hope of escaping had proposed to depart for a season under pretence of collecting revenue. The wary vizier was not to be thus deceived. Suspecting that the real purpose of the proposed expedition was not that which was professed, he objected to its being undertaken, and Meer Cossim was compelled to submit. But though the vizier thus refused to allow his friend an opportunity of collecting his revenues, he was not disposed to forget that Meer Cossim had purchased his alliance by an engagement to pay a monthly subsidy. Payment was demanded, but Meer Cossim pleaded his inability to comply. The vizier then called to his aid the name of his master the Emperor, who, he affirmed, was pressing for the Bengal tribute, and that if it were not forthwith paid, the effects of Meer Cossim would be seized by the imperial officers. Meer Cossim, as was natural, besought the friendly offices of the vizier to avert this extremity, but the vizier declared that he could not interfere, and that the accounts must be settled with the Emperor. Meer Cossim felt, or affected to be in despair; and to shame the vizier into greater consideration, he relinquished the state which he had been accustomed to maintain, and assumed the mortified habit

CHAP. VI. and bearing of a devotee.* The vizier hearing of the change appeared greatly shocked; he lost no time in visiting the desponding prince, and by repeated assurances of the undiminished warmth and sincerity of his friendship, at length induced him to abandon the dress and deportment by which his feelings of disappointment and dejection were expressed, and reassume his princely habiliments and mode of life. But Meer Cossim had yet to gain further experience of the character of his friend. His troops became clamorous for their pay, and surrounded the tent of their master, demanding a settlement. Meer Cossim was unprepared with the ordinary coin of the country;† and to appease them he was obliged to have recourse to a cherished hoard of gold. This, however, was not a process to be repeated, and to avoid the necessity of again resorting to it, Meer Cossim resolved to get rid of an army which he was no longer able to pay without trenching upon resources that were reserved for the last pressure of extremity. The riotous troops were headed by Sumroo, the wretch who had been the willing instrument of executing the murderous orders of the Nabob at Patna. To him Meer Cossim communicated his intention of dispensing with the services of the force which he command-

* This is said in Scott's History of Bengal (on the authority of which this statement rests) to be regarded as a great reflection on a patron.—See page 435.

† The currency is almost exclusively silver. Gold is scarcely in use, except for the fabrication of personal ornaments, or for the purpose of hoarding, for which it is more convenient than silver, as affording the means of secreting great value in a small space.

ed, and he requested that the cannon, as well as the arms and accoutrements of the men, might be returned to one of his officers. Sumroo was not prepared to recognize the justness of the demand; he had a strong opinion of the right of possession. He answered that the articles belonged to those who had them in their keeping, and his practice illustrated his principle. He immediately tendered the services of himself and his battalions to the vizier, by whom they were most graciously accepted. Such an accession to the vizier's army was valuable, and it is not recorded that the prince entertained any scruples on account of the arms and equipments of the men having been furnished at the expense of his friend. This transfer had taken place before the battle of Buxar. Sumroo had there acted on behalf of the vizier; but, as has been seen, he gained for his new employer neither honour nor advantage. The day after the discharge of the troops by Meer Cossim his tents were surrounded by the troops of the vizier, who, suspecting that his friend's stock of gold was not exhausted, was desirous of transferring it into his own coffers. Meer Cossim was mounted on an elephant, and carried to the camp of his ally. A rigid investigation was made as to the extent of his effects, and all that could be discovered were appropriated by the vizier. Meer Cossim, however, was able to secrete a number of valuable jewels, which were dispatched by one of his followers to the Rohilla country.

In the plunder of his friend, the vizier observed

CHAP. VI. neither moderation nor mercy. He would have taken the last rupee which Meer Cossim possessed, if he had been able to discover where it was deposited. But while thus indulging his rapacity without restraint, he steadily refused—and his conduct in this respect was certainly creditable—to surrender Meer Cossim into the hands of the English. The demand had been made before the battle of Buxar and rejected; it was repeated afterwards with no better success. When Major Munro arrived at Benares, the vizier dispatched to him an envoy, named Beny Bahadar, to make proposals of peace. The major insisted, as a preliminary, upon the delivery of Meer Cossim and Sumroo. Beny Bahadar declared the concession of this demand to be impossible, but said, that if it were abandoned, the vizier would give twenty-five lacs of rupees to the Company towards the expenses of the war, twenty-five lacs to the army, and eight lacs to the British commander. The manner in which the proposal was received by Major Munro is thus related by himself:—" My answer was, that if he gave me all the lacs in his treasury, I would make no peace with him until he had delivered me up those murdering rascals; for I never could think that my receiving eleven or twelve lacs of rupees* was a sufficient atonement for the blood of those unfortu-

* Besides the eight lacs intended as a personal present to himself, Major Munro, had the proposal been complied with, would have shared in the twenty-five lacs designed for the army.

nate gentlemen who were murdered at Patna."* This decisive declaration silenced the vizier's envoy, and he departed. He returned after a time, in the hope of softening the British commander, but the latter refused to vary his determination in the slightest degree. Beny Bahadur then requested that an officer, named Captain Stables, might accompany him back, as the captain was familiar with the country language, and the vizier wished to make a proposal to him. The officer whose presence was thus sought was left by his commander at perfect liberty to accept or decline this invitation according to his own discretion. Major Munro told him that he neither advised nor wished him to go, as he might perhaps meet the fate of the sufferers of Patna. Captain Stables, however, resolved to incur the danger, and he proceeded to the vizier's camp. A compromise was now proposed. Shoojah-ad-Dowlah would not deliver up Meer Cossim, but he was ready to withdraw from him his protection (if protection it were) and connive at his escape. With regard to Sumroo the vizier was prepared to go further. He would not surrender him, though his scruple was inexplicable, inasmuch as the course which he proposed as a substitute for this measure was more dishonourable than the surrender would have been. His plan was that two or three gentlemen from the English camp who were acquainted with Sumroo's person should visit the camp of the vizier. Sumroo was then to be invited to an entertainment, and amidst the festive

* Evidence of Major Munro, in First Report.

CHAP. VI. rites was to meet his death in presence of the English witnesses. The vizier supported his plan by an argument seldom neglected in the field of Oriental dialectics—he offered Captain Stables a large sum to use his influence with his commander to get the terms accepted; but the project was not one likely to meet the countenance of Englishmen, and its framer was still doomed to find his proposals rejected.

All hope of making terms with Shoojah-ad-Dowlah being at an end, the British army continued its march towards Allahabad. Chunarghur was besieged and a practicable breach effected, but the assault failed through the bad behaviour of the sepoys, and the success of a second was frustrated in like manner by the failure of the European troops who led the van: these running back, the whole gave way. In the meantime Shoojah-ad-Dowlah was endeavouring to get into the rear of the British army, and one object of this movement was to carry off the Emperor. But the attempt was unsuccessful. Major Munro converted the siege of Chunarghur into a blockade, and leaving a sufficient force to maintain it, retired with the rest of the army to Benares. Shoojah-ad-Dowlah continuing to approach, the English commander concentrated his force by withdrawing the detachment from Chunarghur in expectation of a general action.* The two armies, however, long remained in a state of quiescence, and

* Separate Letter from Fort William, 30th June, 1765. MS.

before activity was again manifested Major Munro had relinquished his command and quitted India. CHAP. VI.

The death of Meer Jaffier, which occurred in February, placed the throne of Bengal once more at the disposal of the English authorities. The competitors were Noojum-ad-Dowlah, the second son of Meer Jaffier (but the eldest surviving), and the infant son of Meerun. The former was on the verge of manhood, the latter was only about six years of age. As both were illegitimate, neither had any legal right to the succession; but both had enjoyed the advantage of having been publicly recognized by the former Nabob as entitled to it.* The British Government determined in favour of the candidate of riper age. Their decision appears to have been influenced by a regard to the public feeling in his favour, and by a prudent desire to avoid giving to the succession the appearance of a new revolution. Previously the new Nabob seems not to have stood high in their esteem. They avowed that they had no favourable opinion either of his abilities or his character;† but barring his illegitimacy, Noojum-ad-Dowlah was the successor to whom the Mahometan law pointed. The son of Meerun was an infant, as were the younger children of Meer Jaffier, and though the elevation of one of these might have contributed to

A. D. 1765.

* Mr. Leycester, a member of council, testifies to the recognition of Noojum-ad-Dowlah, and another of the Company's servants, Mr. Sykes, to that of Meerun's son. See Third Report.

† Letter from Government of Fort William to Court of Directors, 8th Feb. 1765. MS.

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increase the actual power of the Company, it would also have rendered that power more conspicuous than was desired, and to remove the succession out of the family of the late Nabob might, as the council observed, "create troubles." But though the new Nabob apparently ascended the musnud according to ordinary rules, he was, in effect, but the creature of the British power, and in bestowing on him the throne the opportunity afforded for adding to the stability of that power was not neglected. The tendency of events for some years past had been to throw on the Company's government the military defence of the three provinces. They were now to be formally invested with this office. The Nabob was to be relieved from the expense of keeping up any greater military force than might be necessary for purposes of state, for the maintenance of internal peace, and for enforcing the collection of revenue. To meet the increased expense that would thus be thrown on the Company, a monthly payment of five lacs, which Meer Jaffier had made for a short time, was to be continued. In adverting to the incapacity of the new Nabob, the council had promised to take care that proper officers were appointed for the management of the affairs of the government.* To ensure this was the next object of anxiety. The old Nabob had been madly attached to a man named Nuncomar, one of the most faithless and profligate politicians that could be found even in an Eastern

* Letter to Court of Directors, 8th February, 1765.

court; to him all the power of the state had been committed almost without control. Nuncomar was an enemy, and a treacherous enemy, to the English. The diminution of his power was consequently indispensable to the security of their interests, and this it was proposed to effect by transferring the exercise of the chief authority in the state to one believed to be better entitled to confidence. The man selected for the office of chief minister was named Mahomed Reza Khan, and the favour shewn him by the English gave Nuncomar an opportunity of insinuating that it was intended to place him on the throne. Nuncomar's station gave him great influence, and his cunning and activity enabled him to make the best use of it for advancing his own ends. Without concert with the English authorities he had applied to the Emperor for sunnuds confirming Noojum-ad-Dowlah in the succession; and they arrived before the formal recognition of the Nabob by the British government had taken place. But the power of that government was in the ascendant. The influence of the objections raised by Nuncomar to the terms proposed by them had been removed—a treaty founded on those terms had been signed, and Mahomed Reza Khan had been acknowledged as naib or chief manager. Besides the military defence of the country, and the recommendation or appointment of the chief minister of the Nabob, the council had stipulated for such a degree of influence in the appointment of officers of revenue as should be sufficient, it was thought, to guard against any flagrant

CHAP. VI. abuses in that important branch of the public service. All these arrangements may fairly be supposed to have had their origin in an honest zeal for the benefit of the Company by whose servants they were made, and of the country to which they belonged. The same favourable view cannot be taken of their conduct in another instance. They renewed with Noojum-ad-Dowlah the agreement contained in the last treaty made with his father for continuing to the English the privilege of carrying on the inland trade free from duties, excepting the two and a half per cent. paid on salt. Not only was this unreasonable and unjust in itself, but it was in direct contravention of positive orders from the Company at home. The Court of Directors, by letter dated 8th February, 1764, had required the inland trade to be discontinued. The Court of Proprietors shortly afterwards recommended a reconsideration of the subject, with a view to its regulation in such a manner as should "prevent all further disputes between the Soubahdar and the Company." The Court of Directors accordingly, in a letter dated the 1st June, 1764, desired the council of Fort William to form, with the approbation of the Nabob—in the language of the dispatch, "with his free will and consent, and in such a manner as not to afford any just grounds of complaint"—a proper and equitable plan for carrying on the private trade: but it is to be remarked, in giving these directions, the Court took occasion to express their disapprobation of those articles in the treaty with Meer Jaffier which pro-

vided for the immunity of the Company's servants from customs duties except on salt, while the general exemption granted by Meer Cossim was to be reversed. The Court write, "These are terms which appear to be so very injurious to the Nabob and to the natives, that they cannot, in the very nature of them, tend to any thing but the producing general heart-burnings and disaffection; and consequently there can be little reason to expect the tranquillity in the country can be permanent: the orders therefore in our said letter of the 8th of February"—the orders directing the entire abandonment of the inland trade—"are to remain in force, until a more equitable and satisfactory plan can be formed and adopted." In the face of these orders, the council of Calcutta inserted in their treaty with Noojum-ad-Dowlah an article, reserving to the servants of the Company the privilege of continuing to trade upon the same terms as had been granted by Meer Jaffier—terms which the Directors declared injurious to both prince and people, and incompatible with the tranquillity of the country. Well might the authority whose orders were thus set at nought address those by whom the new treaty was framed and concluded, in language of severe and indignant reproof. In expressing their opinion upon the treaty, the Court, after adverting to this article and to their previous orders, say, "we must and do consider what you have done as an express breach and violation of our orders, and as a determined resolution to sacrifice the interests of the Company and the

CHAP. VI. peace of the country to lucrative and selfish views. This unaccountable behaviour puts an end to all confidence in those who made this treaty."*

While the private trade was thus secured for the benefit of the Company's servants in general, those who had been instrumental in placing the new Nabob on the throne had the usual opportunities of promoting their own special interests. Presents of large amount were tendered, and though for a time the members of council displayed a decent coyness, they were not unrelenting: as usual on such occasions, their scruples gave way before the arguments of their tempters. The Nabob dispensed his wealth with a liberality becoming his rank. The gratitude of Mahomed Reza Khan was manifested by the earnestness with which he pressed a participation in his good fortune upon those who had bestowed it on him; and Juggut Seit,† anxious for the support of the British council in aiding his influence with the Nabob, was ready, in the spirit of commercial speculation, to purchase it. Mr. Vansittart had retired from the government before the death of Meer Jaffier, and the chair was occupied by Mr. Spencer, a gentleman who most opportunely for himself had been brought from Bombay just in time to improve his fortune to the extent of two lacs of rupees. Among other large sharers in the shower of wealth were Messrs.

* Letter to Bengal, 19th February, 1766.

† A banker, relative of the two unfortunate persons murdered by Meer Cossim, and successor to their vast trade and wealth.

Johnstone, Leycester, Senior, and Middleton. These gentlemen had formed a deputation, to whom was entrusted the arrangement with the Nabob of the terms of the treaty. Mr. Johnstone had formerly laid down the principle that money bestowed in reward of service rendered by the representatives of the Company, and by their power and influence, rightfully belonged to the Company; he had expressed a tender regard for the reputation of Mr. Vansittart and his colleagues, by recommending the diversion of Meer Cossim's bounty into another channel, lest suspicion should attach to their motives; and he had manifested some disappointment, that when a bond of large amount was offered them, it had not been immediately placed to the credit of the Company. His views had undergone a change, neither the cause nor the process of which is anywhere explained; but he accepted (and did not place to the credit of the Company) two lacs and thirty-seven thousand rupees—his share thus considerably exceeding that of the governor. Mr. Senior received one lac twenty-two thousand five hundred rupees; Mr. Middleton one lac twenty-two thousand five hundred; Mr. Leycester one lac twelve thousand five hundred. Messrs. Pleydell,* Burdett, and Gray, members of council, received one lac each. How the money had been merited in the case of Mr. Burdett does not appear, as he had voted

* Mr. Pleydell, who was dismissed the service for signing an offensive letter to the Court of Directors (see page 422), had been restored.

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alone for calling the infant son of Meerun to the throne. Perhaps it was to prevent trouble arising from his discontent. A scarcely less remarkable object of the Nabob's generosity was Mr. Gideon Johnstone, who was not in the council, nor at the time had ever been in the Company's service; he received fifty thousand rupees for no reason that can be discovered, except that he was the brother of the gentleman who was chief of the deputation.

While the arrangements consequent on the death of Meer Jaffier were in progress, the war in the northern provinces continued to be carried on to the advantage of the English. The council being, however, anxious to bring it to an end, made a very extraordinary proposal towards accommodation. The demand for the surrender of Meer Cossim and Sumroo being the principal obstacle, they expressed their willingness to recede from it on one condition, and the condition was, that the vizier should put Meer Cossim and Sumroo to death "as an act of justice."* The Court of Directors, when informed of the proposal, declared it impossible to believe that this experiment on the vizier's regard for his friends was seriously meant, adding very justly, "if the law of hospitality forbad his delivering them up, surely it forbad his murdering them."†

* Separate Letter to Court of Directors from Government of Fort William, 11th March, 1765. MS.

† Letter to Bengal, 19th February, 1766. It must not be forgotten, however, that the vizier had been quite ready to murder Sumroo.

Chunarghur and Allahabad surrendered to the English in February. In the latter place the Emperor took up his residence. The vizier fled to Lucknow, and from thence to seek refuge among the Rohillas. Meer Cossim had made his escape from the protection of the vizier, and followed the jewels which he had preserved from the plunder to which he had been subjected. Sumroo, having no affection for a falling cause, was seeking a new service. CHAP. VI.

The power of the vizier had indeed been completely broken, and the English were in a condition to strip him altogether of dominion, or to tolerate his retention of it upon any terms which they pleased to dictate; but before his fate was determined Mr. Spencer had ceased to be the head of the British Government in Bengal, and Clive, who during his residence in England had been created an Irish Peer, arrived to supply his place. The circumstances under which this appointment had taken place being remarkable, it will be proper to suspend the progress of the narrative for a short space in order to take a brief view of them.

The unsettled state of Bengal, the setting up and pulling down of kings which for some years past had been the principal business of the English authorities there, the oppression of the people and the distress caused by the interference of powerful foreigners with their industry and trade, the corruption alleged to prevail among the Company's servants, and the financial embarrassments which

CHAP. VI. had paralyzed the Company's operations and placed their credit in danger, had attracted a large share of public attention in England. The sensation produced by the extraordinary intelligence which year after year had brought from Bengal, was naturally greater among those who had an immediate interest in the prosperity of the Company. The proprietors were readily alarmed by any thing which threatened their income with diminution, or the sources whence it was derived with danger, and the state of their affairs in Bengal was such as well to justify discontent with the past and dark forebodings for the future. Party spirit and personal feeling added to the elements of disturbance, and gave abundant indications that a storm was inevitable and not far distant. Clive after his return had naturally been led to mix much in the field of Indian politics. Such talents and information could not have been despised in a man destitute of extrinsic aids to fame, but in Clive they were supported by vast wealth and great parliamentary influence. He had formerly been on terms of friendship with an able and influential director of the Company named Sulivan. They afterwards became alienated from each other, and a short time only was required to change indifference into bitter hatred. As the contest between these two chiefs advanced, the greater part of the proprietors became arrayed on the side of one or the other of the combatants, and each party strove to multiply the number of their adherents and increase their strength on a division by splitting large amounts of stock, for the purpose

of creating fictitious votes.* The directors at that time served for only one year, and the result of the annual election afforded a test of the comparative strength of parties. The first pitched battle between Clive and Sulivan was fought at the election of 1763, and Clive was defeated. But he was gradually gaining strength, and his own exertions to increase his power were aided by the co-operation of circumstances. Before the time arrived for renewing the contest, a special general court was called, upon the requisition of the prescribed number of proprietors, there being, as was declared, "just reason to be alarmed at the present dangerous and critical situation of the Company's affairs in Bengal and other parts of India." The object of those who had called the court was to prepare the way for the return of Clive to Bengal; but after three days' discussion, a majority of the proprietors determined against putting to the vote a motion, referring back to the Court of Directors for reconsideration the recent appointment of Mr. Spencer to the chair of that presidency. This new defeat served but to give fresh spirit to Clive and his supporters. They were deficient of votes—more were made and another court was called. Here, after a fierce debate, a resolution was carried, to the effect that it was the desire of the general court that Lord Clive should

* Five hundred pounds stock then constituted a qualification to vote, and Clive on one occasion employed one hundred thousand pounds in the creation of votes. His friends were equally active to the extent of their ability.

CHAP. VI. be appointed to the exercise of the chief civil and military authority in Bengal.

This was a great victory, but it was as yet imperfect. The outworks had been carried—the citadel, which was the seat of the executive power, was next to be stormed—and Clive declined acceding to the wish expressed in his favour, until he was assured of the support of those to whom he would be directly accountable, and who possessed so largely the power of aiding or frustrating the success of his administration. At a subsequent general court the subject was renewed. It was moved, that the court should be informed what measures had been taken by the Court of Directors in consequence of the resolution respecting Clive. A letter addressed by order of the Court of Directors to Clive, and his answer, were produced. The former enclosed copy of the resolution of the general court, expressed the readiness of the Court of Directors to carry it into effect and to prepare for his lordship's passage. Clive's reply addressed to the secretary was redundant neither in words nor information. It ran thus: —"Sir, I have received your letter enclosing copy of the resolution of the last general court. I must desire you will return the directors my thanks for their offers of preparing every convenience for my passage." The letters having been read, an inquiry was made, whether Clive would express himself ready to accept the appointment which the court desired should be conferred upon him? Clive wished to postpone his answer till after the elec-

tion of directors then approaching. A motion was made by one of his opponents, that as Lord Clive declined to accept immediately the service proposed to him, the Court of Directors should be desired to make "the proper arrangements in the present critical situation of the Company's affairs forthwith." This gave rise to a debate, in the course of which Clive again spoke. His language was more explicit than it had previously been, and he avowed that his main objection to an immediate acceptance of the honour tendered him rested on his hostility to Mr. Sulivan, then deputy chairman. He said, "that he differed so much from" that gentleman with regard "to the measures necessary to be taken for the good of the Company, that he could not consider" him "as a proper chairman of the Court of Directors—that it would be in vain for him to exert himself as he ought in the office of governor and commander-in-chief of their (the Company's) forces, if his measures were to be thwarted and condemned at home, as they probably would be, by a Court of Directors under the influence of a chairman whose conduct, upon many occasions, had evinced his ignorance of East India affairs, and who was also known to be his personal and inveterate enemy; that it was a matter totally indifferent to him who filled the chair if Mr. Sulivan did not—but that he could not, consistently with the regard he had for his own reputation, and the advantages he should be emulous of establishing for the Company, proceed in the appointment with which they had ho-

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noured him if that gentleman continued to have the lead at home."* This called up Mr. Sulivan, who "expressed himself ready to co-operate in the most honourable and friendly manner in any measures that might prove agreeable to his lordship and conducive to the Company's interest, in confirmation whereof, he pledged his faith and honour with the Court." A wish was expressed by many proprietors that the differences between the contending parties might be consigned to oblivion, and the scene which followed seems to have been one of no ordinary excitement. The record says, "an amicable conclusion of all difficulties and differences upon the occasion having with great energy, and very pathetically, been recommended from motives of the

* Malcolm's Life of Clive, vol. ii. pages 231, 232.—Sir John Malcolm professes to quote from a MS. report drawn up by Sir Henry Strachey. His authority has been followed in relating the substance of Clive's speech, his report being the most full that is extant, and probably the most correct. In his narrative of some other parts of this series of transactions, Sir John Malcolm is exceedingly inaccurate. He states (vol. ii. p. 234), that the letter of the Court of Directors to Clive informed him "that a ship was ready to receive him." This is not the fact—the letter only stated the court's readiness to "prepare every convenience for" his passage, "in the manner that might be most agreeable to" him. Sir John Malcolm's report of Clive's answer is still wider from the truth. Clive is represented as having "replied, that, for reasons he had assigned at the general court, he could not think of embarking till he knew the result of the election of directors, which was to take place in the ensuing month." The letter of Clive, which will be found in the text, contains nothing of this. Sir John had evidently never seen either the letter of the Court or Clive's answer.

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great benefits that might accrue to the nation in general and to the Company in particular therefrom; his lordship then signified, that he would declare his final resolution in a few days."* The motion appears to have been withdrawn, and thus ended this stormy debate. The few days' consideration required by Clive produced nothing but a letter to the Court of Directors, reiterating his refusal to proceed to India while his rival, Mr. Sulivan, had the lead at home.† But the annual election of directors was approaching, and upon its result the final determination of Clive depended. It passed, and neither party had any great cause for triumph, about one half the number of directors being returned by each party.‡ The balance of success, however, was rather in favour of Clive. Sulivan, it

* Minutes of General Court. MS.

† This letter Sir John Malcolm appears to have mistaken for that addressed by Clive to the secretary of the Company, in answer to the letter of the Court of Directors expressing their readiness to make provision for his passage. Between the writing of the two letters a general court had been held, and it was in consequence of what then took place that the second letter was written.

‡ Sir John Malcolm states, that at one of the general courts, in which the appointment of Clive was discussed, the party of Mr. Sulivan was desirous of obtaining a ballot; but that, though upwards of three hundred proprietors were present, the proper number of signatures to a requisition could not be obtained. It seems, however, incredible that, while Mr. Sulivan was able to procure his own election, though by a bare majority, and to carry with him as many supporters as amounted to nearly half the Court, he should have been unable to find nine proprietors willing to demand a ballot on a question in which he took a deep interest.

CHAP. VI. is said, secured his own election by a majority of only one; and Messrs. Rous and Bolton, both friends of Clive, were appointed to the chairs. Clive no longer hesitated to comply, but accepted the appointment which he was regarded as so pre-eminently fitted to fill.

Among the points in dispute between Clive and his opponents was one of great personal importance to himself—the possession of the jaghire granted him by Meer Jaffier, after the retreat of the Shazada. For three years he received the profits. The Court of Directors then forbade any further payments being made, ordered the future profits to be carried to the account of the Company, and required accounts of all payments previously made.* Clive thereupon instituted a suit in Chancery against the Company, which was not decided when he was called to resume the government of Bengal. He then proposed an arrangement, which, with some slight modification, was accepted and carried into effect. It was agreed that Clive should retain the jaghire for ten years, if he should live so long; and that at the termination of that period, or upon his death at an earlier date, it should revert to the Company. All difficulties were now removed, and Clive departed for the scene where, some years before, he had laid the foundations of the wealth and power to which he had attained. Vast was the contrast between this and his first visit to India!

A. D. 1765. Clive arrived at Calcutta on the 3rd May, 1765

* Letter to Bengal, 27th April, 1763.

He had been accompanied from England by two civil servants of the Company, Mr. Sumner* and Mr. Sykes; and these, with Mr. Verelst and General Carnac, were to form a select committee, vested with extraordinary powers, to pursue whatever means they should judge most proper to restore peace and tranquillity to the country. Whenever it could be done conveniently, the council at large were to be consulted; but the power of determining was to rest in the committee alone. As soon as peace and tranquillity should be "restored and established in the soubahdarship of Bengal," the extraordinary powers of the committee were to cease, and the committee itself to be dissolved.† At the time of Clive's arrival, the son of Meer Jaffier was in peaceful possession of the throne of Bengal, under the protection of the English Government, before whose victorious arms the Vizier was flying; while, with the Emperor, relations of friendly alliance had been established. The state of affairs was therefore widely different from that which had presented itself to the imaginations of the proprietors during the stormy contest which preceded the appointment of Clive; and but for the fact that the relations of the Company's government and the Vizier were yet to be determined, the committee would scarcely have been warranted in exercising the extraordinary

* Mr. Sumner was one of the servants dismissed for signing an offensive letter to the Court of Directors. He had been restored.

† Letter from the Court of Directors to Bengal, 1st June, 1764.

powers with which they had been invested. Clive seems to have been disappointed that there was so little left for him to achieve; and he felt more especially aggrieved by the government having provided a successor to Meer Jaffier before his arrival. The promptitude of the council might have been influenced by views of personal advantage; but the dissatisfaction of Clive was unreasonable, and must be referred to a feeling, more lofty perhaps than that of his rivals, but not more disinterested. The ardour of the council might be stimulated by cupidity—the complaints of Clive were the fruits of disappointed ambition. Nothing could have been more pernicious than to keep the succession to the throne in abeyance for several months; nothing could have tended more directly to unsettle the country, to relax the springs of government, and to shake the foundations of obedience. Clive himself would certainly not have acted in the manner in which he professed to think that his predecessors should have acted.

The committee lost no time in entering upon their duties; but, as might have been expected, the members of council shewed no alacrity in recognizing their authority. Mr. Leycester and Mr. Johnstone were desirous of obtaining some explanation from the committee as to the meaning and intent of their powers, which were especially limited to the restoration of peace and tranquillity; but Clive answered, that he would not discuss such points—that the committee themselves were the

sole judges of their own powers, and were resolved to carry them into execution. The fierce and haughty bearing of Clive silenced his opponents, if it did not satisfy them.* CHAP. VI.

A subject which was among those that first occupied the attention of the committee, was one which the council would gladly have postponed. The enormous presents, by which many of the Company's servants had enriched themselves at the expense of opulent and powerful natives, had attracted attention at home. The danger and the scandal of permitting such practices to be continued without restraint had been felt, and it had been resolved to prepare forms of covenant to be executed by the civil and military servants of the Company, binding them not to accept the gift of any land, rents, or revenues whatever, nor of any other property, beyond a very small amount, without the consent of the Court of Directors. The covenants had arrived at Calcutta in January, but the council had not taken any steps A. D. 1765. towards procuring their execution; and, indeed, as the death of Meer Jaffier and the accession of his eldest surviving son immediately followed the arrival of the covenants, it is obvious that a hasty execution of those documents would to the council have been exceedingly inconvenient. It appears, also, that they disapproved of them on principle; they thought them too unreasonable and absurd to

* Letter from Clive to General Carnac.—Malcolm's Memoirs, vol. ii. page 321.—Johnstone's Letter to the Proprietors of East-India Stock, page 31.

CHAP. VI. be adopted or acted upon. One of their own body stated, that he had heard from his brethren that the regulation appeared to them so new and extraordinary, and seemed liable to so many objections, that they proposed sending home a remonstrance against it, setting forth their reasons for judging the measure inexpedient and improper.* The select committee took a different view. They peremptorily required that the covenants should be executed; and the demand met with little resistance, though it excited much discontent.

* Johnstone's Letter to Proprietors of East-India Stock, page 63. Mr. Johnstone labours to shew, that even though the covenants had been signed, the members of council might, nevertheless, have received the presents; and his reasoning in the following passage is certainly amusing, if not convincing:—" It is said that the covenants had arrived before the death of Meer Jaffier; that these covenants ought to have been immediately signed, which would have effectually prevented the receiving the presents; and that therefore the gentlemen ought to be in no better case than if they had signed the covenants. I answer, that the covenants do not absolutely prohibit the accepting of presents in all cases, but only require the consent of the directors to such presents. The intention of which plainly was, to introduce a check which did not before exist; that the directors of the Company, and still more the whole proprietors, should have a power of inquiry into the motives for which such presents were given and received; and when these motives should appear to have been perfectly consistent with fair and honourable conduct with respect to the Company's affairs, it was not to be supposed that the directors or the proprietors would obstruct their servants from accepting presents agreeable to the universal practice of the country, or seize upon such presents and appropriate them to themselves, when they were truly given merely as presents, and by which the Company lost nothing, though individuals were benefited. The presents in question can be fairly supported upon

This was not the only mortification to which the members of the council were subjected by the authority of the select committee. The Nabob complained that his minister, Mahomed Reza Khan, had abused his office, by impoverishing his master's treasury for the purpose of conciliating the favour of the powerful servants of the Company. An inquiry was forthwith instituted into the presents which had already been received. It was perhaps not conducted in the fairest spirit, nor in the manner most likely to elicit the truth. It was a subject of complaint that some of the witnesses were subjected to imprisonment, and that their testimony was given under the terror of a military force. These circumstances, combined with the tendency of Oriental witnesses to temper the true with the agreeable, may be presumed to have had some weight in determining the character of the evidence against the offending members of council; but upon their own admission there was quite enough to shew that, when the gifts of fortune fell in their way, they were not scrupulously inquisitive as to the delicacy or propriety of seizing them. It was alleged that they did not follow the precedent afforded by Clive and his associates, and at a later date by Vansittart and his council—that they did not wait till money was tendered, and then decently

this footing—that they were such as the directors and proprietors ought themselves to approve and confirm, even if the gentlemen had actually signed the covenants before they received them." —Pages 62, 63.

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accept it, but that their cupidity had outstripped the courtesy of the Nabob and his ministers—that they had violated the decorum of covetousness by actually demanding presents, and that their demands had been enforced by menaces. To what extent the charge was true, it is not worth while to inquire. The accused parties might have overstepped the discretion observed by their predecessors,* and this was unwise, as it exposed them to unnecessary obloquy; the presents would have come in due time, whether demanded or not, and some voluntary offers were certainly made to them. There was probably little difference between their conduct and that of their predecessors, except in one respect; they knew that, in indulging their desire for the sudden accumulation of wealth, they were disobeying the orders of their superiors. The covenants which were to restrain their avarice had arrived, and they ought to have been signed. They refrained because they intended to profit by the forbidden sources of advantage, and then contended that, as the covenants were not executed, they could not be obligatory.† They thus added to the violation of principle, of which they were guilty in common with their predecessors, a violation of the positive orders of those whom they were bound to obey; and this appears to be the chief, perhaps the sole, ground of distinc-

* Clive, however, it must be remembered, did not think it wrong to ask for a jaghire—at least he asked, whether he thought it wrong or not.

† Letter from Select Committee to Court of Directors, 1st Oct. 1765.—Third Report, page 438.

tion between their offence and that of Clive, Vansittart, and others.* CHAP. VI.

* Mr. Johnstone did not fail to refer to the example of Clive, as warranting the conduct of himself and his colleagues. In a long minute, which he recorded on the 17th June, 1765, he says, "With regard to presents in general, we have the approved example of the President, Lord Clive himself, for our guide, who, though this Nabob's father's princely bounty on his coming to the government had made his fortune easy, and the Company's welfare his only motive for staying in India, yet acknowledges his having made use of the influence of Juggut Seit to apply for a jaghire, which, though amounting to £30,000 per annum, was not thought improper by him to accept of, even in the circumstances of distress he then represents the old Nabob to have been in—his life twice saved from his troops mutinying for their arrears only by the awe of our arms, and large balances then due to the Company, which were not all paid till after the revolution, 1760."—Third Report, page 434. In his letter to the Proprietors of East-India Stock, Mr. Johnstone returns to the charge with some force of reason, and some felicity of language. "Let it be considered who is the person that appears to push this inquiry with a zeal so very active and unrelenting. It is that man whose whole fortune, a fortune that is immense, arose from the presents which he received upon another occasion from an Indian prince, the father of the present Nabob, who is now happily under the protection of his lordship's gratitude, who received that present at a time when the Nabob's treasury was almost empty, when he was unable to pay the sums stipulated to the Company for their losses, and the sums due for losses to private individuals, which were put off to a distant and uncertain day, and when he was even unable to pay the presents themselves, for some of which assignments or tuncaws were given upon the revenue. It is he too who took a grant of a jaghire for thirty thousand pounds sterling yearly to himself, when by every rule of duty he ought and might have obtained it for the Company."—Letter, page 74. Clive endeavoured to draw a distinction between his own case and that of others, but the attempt was vain, except as to the alteration in the position of the Company's servants by the introduction of the covenants. Sir John Malcolm labours strenuously, but scarcely

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A very unfavourable report of the conduct of those who had been engaged in placing Noojum-ad-

more successfully than Clive himself in the same cause. Referring to the presents received on the accession of Noojum-ad-Dowlah, Sir John says—“ These presents have been justly arraigned as furnishing powerful motives to the Company’s servants for making revolutions by which they were enriched; and it is one of the heaviest charges against Clive, that his example was the origin of this baneful practice. The fact is not disputed; but it happened in this case, as in most others where small men attempt to imitate great, that they reach only the defects, and fail in every other part.”—Memoirs of Clive, vol. ii. pages 297, 298. As the irregular indulgence by Clive of his desire to possess a fortune is here tacitly admitted to be a defect, his case is virtually surrendered. Great men can claim no exemption from the moral and honourable obligations to which all men are subject, nor when they violate those obligations can they secure a monopoly of the indulgence. Those who can follow them in nothing else, will find no difficulty in emulating their weakness and their vices. Those who followed Clive might be—they were smaller men—but the exercise of grasping avarice requires not high intellect, and the biographer of Clive might have remembered that, if the successors of his hero were smaller, their acquisitions also were smaller. Not one of them obtained a jaghire of £30,000 a year. With regard to the effect of presents in stimulating revolutions, it is to be observed that those who placed Noojum-ad-Dowlah on the musnud are less open to suspicion on this ground than their predecessors. The arrangement which placed Meer Jaffier on the throne was a revolution; that which elevated Meer Cossim in his place was also a revolution. In the case of Noojum-ad-Dowlah there wanted nothing but legitimacy of birth to constitute him the lawful successor of his father; and though, in this respect, his title was defective, there was no competitor who could produce a better. Among a number of imperfect claims, his was the least imperfect, and the regular order of succession was adhered to as far as practicable.

It is remarkable that Clive himself always seemed to be impressed with a deep admiration of his own disinterestedness, and a sincere conviction that he was quite free from the offences

Dowlah on the throne was made by the select committee to the Court of Directors. Some of Clive's

which he condemned so severely in others. These feelings are perceptible, not only in his public statements, where they might be assumed from motives of policy, but not less in communications which might be expected to be more free and unreserved. In a letter to General Carnac, relating the proceedings at the first meeting of the board, he says—" After dispatching the current business the board broke up; and to-morrow we sit in committee, when I make no doubt of discovering such a scene as will be shocking to human nature. They have all received immense sums for this new appointment, and are so shameless as to own it publicly." After some further blame of the council, he breaks out into the following passionate exclamation. " Alas, how is the English name sunk! I could not avoid paying the tribute of a few tears to the departed and lost fame of the British nation."—Malcolm's Memoirs of Clive, vol. ii. page 322. In another letter, written about the same time to Mr. Palk of Madras, Clive says, " The large sums of money already received and obligations given for the rest, on account of this treaty, are so very notorious through the whole town, and they themselves have taken such little pains to conceal them, that we cannot, without forfeiting our honour and reputation, possibly avoid a retrospection as far back as the receipt of the covenants and Meer Jaffier's death."—Ibid. page 326. Clive would have been very unwilling that the retrospection should have extended " as far back as " the elevation, instead of the " death" of Meer Jaffier; he *was* very unwilling that inquiry should be made into his jaghire, and expressed himself in language of bitter indignation against those who sought to disturb his possession. In observing the different rule of judgment which he applied to the conduct of others and to his own, it is impossible to refrain from the conclusion that either he was guilty of the most consummate and odious hypocrisy, or that, where his own actions and interests were concerned, he was subject to the influence of aberrations, so far surpassing the ordinary delusions of self-love as to be scarcely consistent with perfect sanity.

Clive promised that he would not enrich himself by proceeding to India at the time under review; and he boasted that he had kept his word: but he had previously reaped his golden

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opponents were men of energy scarcely inferior to his own;* but he had the power to crush them, and was not indisposed to exert it. Some of the discontented, to avert worse consequences, retired; some of the more refractory were suspended, and no inconsiderable number were ultimately dismissed

harvest, and for a man who was one of the richest subjects of the British crown, the sacrifice was not great. Yet even while thus promising and thus boasting—while preparing to launch the thunder of his authority against all who had manifested an undue impatience to become rich, he shewed that in himself the desire of accumulation was not entirely subdued by the vast amount of gratification which it had enjoyed. On his arrival at Madras he heard of the successful progress of the British arms in Bengal; a report widely different from that which he had expected to receive. He immediately wrote to a gentleman who acted as one of his attornies in England, instructing him to invest in East-India Stock, *without loss of a minute,* all money that Clive might at the time have in the public funds, or anywhere else, and as much as could be borrowed in his name. To guard against others availing themselves of his views, if the letter should be opened by any one except the party to whom it was addressed, this instruction was written in cypher, the key to which could be obtained only at the East-India House. So great was the anxiety of the agent, Mr. Walsh, that it seems to have impaired his consciousness and powers of recollection. On receiving the letter, he immediately, in company with Mr. Rous, a director and friend of Clive's, to whom also a letter was addressed in cypher, proceeded to the East-India House to procure an interpretation of the mysterious characters; forgetful, as it would seem, that it being Sunday, there was little probability of the object being attained. When the instruction was decyphered, Mr. Walsh proceeded to act upon it. The amount of stock bought was not very large; the reason, it is to be presumed, being that the agents of Clive had not much money at command; but some was bought at 165¼, which a few months afterwards was worth 190.—See Third Report and Appendix 83.

* Mr. Johnstone, more especially.

the service.* Mahomed Reza Khan was exonerated from the charges preferred against him, but he was not permitted to enjoy his vast power unimpaired.† The Nabob had manifested great dislike to the arrangement by which it had been placed in his hands, and it was reduced by admitting Juggut Seit and Roydooloob to a participation. The Nabob gained nothing by this division of power; but it might possibly in some degree soothe his irritated feelings, and it had the additional recommendation of annoying Clive's opponents. CHAP. VI.

* In consequence of the disclosures made by the select committee, legal proceedings were instituted against Mr. Johnstone and others, with the view of procuring a refund of the amounts which they had received as presents after the arrival of the covenants, but by a vote of the general court they were directed to be discontinued.

† On the character of Mahomed Reza Khan Clive seems to have expressed himself, at different times, with little regard to consistency. In a letter to General Carnac, quoted in Malcolm's Memoirs (vol. ii. page 560), he says: "There seems to have been a combination between the blacks and the whites to divide all the revenues of the country between them, for the Nabob knows nothing about the matter. Large sums have been taken out of both treasuries by Mahomed Reza Khan at Moorshedabad, and by Nuncomar at Calcutta." In another letter to General Carnac, quoted in the same work (vol. ii. page 359), Clive says: "I am as fully averse to Reza Ali Khan's remaining in the great post of Naib Soubah. His being a Mussulman, acute and clever, are reasons of themselves, if there were no others, against trusting that man with too much power." Yet the select committee, of which Clive was chief, *unanimously* acquitted him of malversation (see Appendix, No. 84, Third Report); and in their letter to the Court of Directors, 30th September, 1765, the administration of Mahomed Reza Khan is pronounced "irreproachable."

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More important matters remained to be adjusted—the conclusion of the war with the Vizier, the settlement of the relations of the Company with the Emperor, and a new arrangement with the Nabob; for this, too, formed part of the plans of Clive. The Vizier, with his allies, the Mahrattas, having on the 3rd May been defeated by the English, he signified a few days afterwards his desire of peace, upon any conditions which the victors might think fit to prescribe. Clive proceeded to the English camp to arrange the terms; and the vanquished prince had no reason to complain of their harshness. The transfer of the entire dominions of the Vizier to the Emperor had been seriously contemplated; but the design was regarded by Clive (as well as by the Court of Directors at home when they became aware of the project) as impolitic and dangerous. The Vizier was, therefore, restored to the possession of all the territories which he had previously governed, with the exception of Korah, and such parts of the province of Allahabad as were then actually occupied by the Emperor.* A defensive alliance was to subsist between the Vizier, the Nabob, and the English; the latter were to carry on trade duty free; but the Vizier objected to granting them permission to establish factories within his dominions, and the claim was not pressed. The surrender of Meer Cossim and Sumroo was no longer within the Vizier's

A. D. 1765.

* The Emperor held his court in the city of Allahabad.—See page 475.

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power—one impediment to peace was thus removed, and the prince evinced no reluctance to stipulate that he would never entertain, receive, or countenance them. As an indemnification for the expenses of the war, he agreed to pay fifty lacs of rupees within thirteen months. This amount Clive and the select committee allowed to be inadequate; but the reasons which they urged against pressing for more were creditable both to their liberality and prudence. The Vizier's "circumstances," they represented, "would not afford more without oppressing the country, and thereby laying the foundation of future contention and trouble." * This explanation was followed by pointing out that no money had been granted "for any other consideration whatsoever." † The intent of this remark is obvious; but as some of the select committee were not distinguished for shunning the favours of fortune, its good taste is less palpable.

The Emperor was less fortunate than his rebellious officer. Not only was his expectation of establishing himself in the place of the Vizier disappointed, but in the settlement of his recognized claims to tribute from Bengal, more regard was shewn to the convenience of those who had to pay than to the right of him who had to receive. The Emperor demanded the amount in money and jaghire, which had been fixed by engagements with

* Letter of Select Committee to Court of Directors, 30th Sept. 1765.

† Ibid.

CHAP. VI. Meer Jaffier and Meer Cossim. Clive successfully objected to the jaghire, and five lacs and a half of rupees were thus annually saved to the revenues of Bengal. This point being yielded, the Emperor applied for the arrears which were due, amounting to thirty-two lacs. Clive answered that it was impossible to pay one rupee, on account of the impoverishment of the treasury from various causes, more especially the war, which he did not fail to remind the Emperor had been maintained partly on his majesty's account. The Emperor resisted this attempt to confiscate the arrears of his tribute, and the "obstinacy" of the English negotiators (so it is termed by themselves) drew from him expressions of "warmth and displeasure;*" but the descendant of the Emperors of Delhi had no choice but to abandon his claim with a good grace, or to continue to assert it without any hope of profiting by his pertinacity. He took the former course, and the thirty-two lacs of arrears were numbered among things to be forgotten. The negotiation proceeded, and in its progress the English Government gained an important accession to its power and influence. The Emperor had some years before offered to bestow upon the Company the dewanny of the three provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, but it was then declined. It was now solicited, bestowed, and accepted. The English East-India Company was acknowledged as the representative of the

* Letters from Lord Clive and General Carnac to the Select Committee, 12th April, 1765.—Appendix 89 to Third Report.

throne of Delhi in the three provinces; and the nizamut being at the same time confirmed to the Nabob, the British authorities were fortified by the sanction of that power which, not long before, had been paramount in India, and which still commanded respectful homage even when unable to enforce obedience.*

The way to render the gift of the dewanny available had been previously prepared. Clive, by representing to the Nabob the financial difficulties by which he was surrounded, had prevailed upon him to accept of an annual allowance of fifty-three lacs of rupees for the support of his dignity and contingent expenses, leaving the remainder of the revenues to be disbursed by the English Government. The grant of the Emperor entitled the Company to any surplus that might remain after the stipulated payments were made; and they now lacked nothing of sovereignty but the name. The views under which Clive and his colleagues acted are thus expounded by themselves:—"The perpetual struggles for superiority between the nabobs and your agents, together with the recent proofs before us of notorious and avowed corruption, have rendered us unanimously of opinion, after the most mature deliberation, that no other method could be suggested of laying the axe to the root of all these evils than that of obtaining the dewanny of Bengal, Behar,

* The duties of dewanny consist in the collection and management of the revenues. The nizamut comprehends the other functions of government.

CHAP. VI. and Orissa for the Company."* They observe further: "The experience of years has convinced us that a division of power is impossible without generating discontent and hazarding the whole. All must belong either to the Company or the Nabob; and we leave you to judge which alternative is the most desirable and the most expedient in the present circumstances of affairs. As to ourselves, we know of no system we could adopt that could less affect the Nabob's dignity, and at the same time secure the Company against the fatal effects of future revolutions, than this of the dewanny. The power is now lodged where it can only be lodged with safety to us."† Such were the representations of the select committee to the Court of Directors; and the language held in his private communications by Clive, the prime mover of their proceedings, entirely concurred with their official statements. "With regard to the magnitude of our possessions," said he, "be not staggered. Assure yourself that the Company must either be what they are or be annihilated. Hitherto, at least, one can see no alternative; for in a moderate state, though the power might still be preserved, corruption and frequent revolutions must in the end overset us." ‡

Clive denied that he had formed the resolution of obtaining for the Company the dewanny while

* Letter of Select Committee to Court of Directors, 30th Sept. 1765.

† Ibid.

‡ Private Letter to Mr. Dudley, Deputy Chairman, 29th Sept. 1765. Malcolm's Memoirs, vol. ii. page 344.

he was at Madras;* yet the reasons which he assigned in justification of the measure were as valid then as when he arrived in Bengal; and it appears from a private letter written by him from Madras, that if the resolution had not been actually formed, it had been a subject of meditation with him. He says: "We have at last arrived at that critical period which I have long foreseen; I mean that period which renders it necessary for us to determine whether we can or shall take the whole to ourselves. Jaffier Ali Khan is dead, and his natural son is a minor, but I know not yet whether he is yet declared successor. Shoojah-ad-Dowlah is beat from his dominion—we are in possession of it, and it is scarcely hyperbole to say to-morrow the whole Mogul empire is in our power. The inhabitants of the country we know, by long experience, have no attachment to any obligation; their forces are neither disciplined, commanded, nor paid as ours are. Can it, then, be doubted that a large army of Europeans will effectually preserve us sovereigns, not only holding in awe the attempts of any country prince, but by rendering us so truly formidable, that no French, Dutch, or other enemy will presume to molest us? You will, I am sure, imagine with me, that after the length we have run, the princes of Hindostan must conclude our views to be boundless; they have seen such instances of our ambition, that they cannot suppose us capable of moderation." As Clive could not mean to cast blame on his own

* See Third Report, page 314.

CHAP. VI. policy in dethroning Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, it is to be supposed that his remarks here apply to the war with the Vizier, and the engagements entered into with the Emperor; but Clive might have remembered that the war with the Vizier was forced upon the British Government, and that the countenance of the Emperor was of some value in the conduct of it. Clive was dissatisfied with those who exercised the government, and he considered their policy in the spirit of a partisan, not of a statesman. The Vizier protected and encouraged men guilty of deliberate and extended murder. Would Clive have acknowledged that, in this respect, the British nation had no ground for complaint? The Vizier demanded the surrender of Behar—Clive would certainly have been the last man to gratify him. Subsequently he observes: "The very nabobs whom we might support would be either covetous of our possessions, or jealous of our power. Ambition, fear, avarice, would be daily watching to destroy us; a victory would be but a temporary relief to us, for the dethroning of the first nabob would be followed by setting up another, who from the same principles would, when his treasure admitted of his keeping up an army, pursue the very path of his successor. We must indeed become nabobs ourselves in fact, if not in name—perhaps totally so without disguise; but on this subject I cannot be certain until my arrival in Bengal." After adverting to some military arrangements which he deemed necessary, and blaming the march of the British troops beyond

the Nabob's dominions, he says: "I could have wished that our operations had been carried on upon a plan of more moderation, and that we had not been obliged to maintain any other military force than what might be sufficient to preserve and pursue our commercial advantages; but since our views are extended, and since commerce alone is not the whole of the Company's support, we must go forward —to retract is impossible."* Nothing can be more sound than Clive's conclusion; and if, in his judgment of others, he had allowed to the force of circumstances the same weight which he gave it in determining his own policy, there would have been little to impugn in the reasoning by which it was supported. It is a remark too trite almost for repetition, that the British empire in India is the creation of circumstances; but, like many similar remarks, it has become trite because incontrovertibly true. That empire owes its extent and grandeur to the ambition, not of those by whom it has been reared, but of their enemies. The main causes which had contributed to its growth up to the time of Clive, were the hostility of the French, the perfidy of Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, and the ambition of the Vizier. These had changed entirely the position and character of the Company's government. Notwithstanding the instructions from home, which were invariably pacific, it had been found impossible to avoid war: the results placed at the feet of the English merchants power and dominion which they never sought,

* Private Letter to Mr. Rous, 17th April, 1765.

CHAP. VI. but which they could not decline without sinking into abject weakness and contempt, and what would have been worse, without affording opportunity to European rivals to profit by their unreasonable and suicidal abandonment. In the language of Clive—to retract was impossible.

In the arrangements made at this time with Clive, the Nabob seems to have had little reason for complaint. His title to the throne was not the clearest, and it is admitted alike by the testimony of friends and foes that he was altogether unfit for the active duties of government. There is no evidence that he evinced any unwillingness to accept the name of sovereign and a large revenue, as a full satisfaction of his claims; and as he was one of the weakest, if not one of the worst, of Oriental princes—utterly sunk in intemperance and sensuality, incapable of rational thought or vigorous effort—an arrangement which provided him the means of unbounded indulgence, and relieved him from the cares of state, offered as the price of power that which a mind like the Nabob's might be presumed to value more. Towards the Emperor Clive scarcely shewed equal liberality. It might not be expedient to gratify his wish to employ the English as the instruments of making conquests for his benefit; but the mode in which his pecuniary claims upon the three provinces were disposed of was not that which the Emperor of Delhi had a right to expect at the hands of those to whom he was giving a place among the states of India.

Among the various questions of which Clive had

to dispose, during this his third period of residence in India, was that of the private trade. The Court of Directors, it will be recollected, had forbidden their servants engaging in that trade, till some plan should be devised more equitable than that conceded by Meer Jaffier, and confirmed by his weak successor.* Clive, when at home, had strenuously urged the necessity of restraining the servants of the Company from trading in salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, articles which were among the chief objects of internal commerce, and with which the interference of foreigners had been felt as peculiarly vexatious. In a letter to the Court of Directors before he left England he said, " The trading in salt, betel, and tobacco, having been one cause of the present disputes, I hope these articles will be restored to the Nabob, and your servants absolutely forbid to trade in them." † Again, in another letter: " the odium of seeing such monopolies in the hands of foreigners need not be insisted on."‡ It could scarcely, therefore, have been doubted that Clive would have been zealous in carrying out the orders of the Court of Directors, consonant as they were to his own avowed opinions: yet, within a month after his arrival at Calcutta, Clive entered into a partnership with his colleagues in the select committee, Messrs. Sumner, Verelst, and Sykes, for the purpose of dealing in salt. An attempt has been made to excuse Clive,

* See page 471.

† Letter to Court of Directors, 27th April, 1764. Appendix 2 to Fourth Report.

‡ Malcolm's Memoirs, vol. ii. page 313.

CHAP. VI. on the ground that his share of the profits of the speculation (which were enormous) was not appropriated to his own benefit, but was distributed among certain friends and dependents. This cannot alter the character of the proceeding. Clive had declared that the trade ought not to be permitted to the servants of the Company, and the Court of Directors had forbidden them to engage in it. Under these circumstances, he could no more be justified in entering upon the trade in salt for the benefit of others than for his own. Clive, too, at the very time he was thus acting, was claiming the character of a reformer, and addressing the Court of Directors in such language as the following: "Is there a man anxious for the speedy return of his son, his brother, or his friend, and solicitous to see that return accompanied by affluence of fortune, indifferent to the means by which it may have been obtained? Is there a man who, void of all but selfish feelings, can withhold his approbation of any plan that promises not sudden riches to those, his dearest connections? who can look with contempt upon measures of moderation, and who can cherish all upstart greatness, though stigmatized with the spoils of the Company? If there is such a man, to him all arguments would be vain—to him I speak not. My address is to those who can judge coolly of the advantages to be desired for their relations and friends, nor think the body corporate wholly unentitled to their attention."* Yet Clive at this time

* Letter of Clive to Court of Directors, 30th Sept. 1765. Appendix 73, Third Report.

was engaging in a trade forbidden by the orders of his superiors, for the purpose of enriching suddenly several persons, some of whom, at least, had small claims upon either the Company or the country. One of them was a near relation of Lord Clive:* he had been in the service of the Company; his good fortune had been far inferior to that of his patron, but it seems, from the testimony of a witness not indisposed to speak favourably, that it was tolerably proportioned to his merits.† Another of

* Captain Maskeylyne.

† Sir John Malcolm says (Memoirs, vol. ii. pages 162-163), "I should conclude from what appears in the manuscripts in my possession, that though a pleasant and respectable gentleman, Captain Maskeylyne had little talent as an officer. His conduct to part of the Nabob's family while commanding at Arcot had been severely condemned by Mr. Pigot. We find amongst his letters to his brother-in-law an indignant remonstrance against the treatment he had met with from the governor, who also wrote Clive fully on the subject. The latter, in his reply to Mr. Pigot, states the great uneasiness which the circumstance had caused him, but adds, that he derived consolation from the belief that it entirely proceeded from an error of judgment." Surely the orders of the Court of Directors ought not to have been violated for the sake of making a fortune for one who had no better claim than that of being "a pleasant and respectable gentleman," who on one particular occasion had behaved so ill that his warmest friend could defend his good intentions only at the expense of his understanding. The pecuniary circumstances of Captain Maskeylyne are of no public interest, but Clive gave different accounts of them at different periods. In a letter to his father, 29th December, 1758, quoted by Sir John Malcolm (vol. ii. page 164), Clive says—"My brother-in-law, Captain Maskeylyne, goes by this conveyance, and will bring you this—he is worth £10,000 or £11,000." In a speech delivered in the House of Commons, 30th March, 1772, Lord Clive stated, that when Captain Maskeylyne quitted the service (previously to his accompanying Clive back to India)

CHAP. VI. the fortunate sharers in the salt profits was the private surgeon of Lord Clive; and another appears to have contributed to his comfort in an humbler capacity—he is stated to have been his lordships footman.* On the inconsistency of such conduct with either the public duty or the public professions of Clive, it is unnecessary to dwell.

While the select committee were thus enriching themselves or their dependents by a speculation in salt, a plan was maturing for distributing the profits of the trade in that article, as well as of the trade in betel-nut and tobacco, among the civil and military servants of the Company; and this plan was ultimately carried into effect without the sanction of orders from home. Two reasons have been urged in justification of this measure—that circumstances were changed by the virtual transfer of the sovereignty of the country to the Company, and that the salaries of public servants being notoriously inadequate to their support, both justice and prudence required that some authorized means of making up the deficiency should be adopted. Both these reasons have some weight. Under the native governments, the trade in each of the three articles had been a monopoly: there was nothing extraordinary in continuing the monopolies, and applying the profits either to the general purposes of the

he was "not worth £3,000 in the world."—Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. xvii. page 348.

* See speech of Governor Johnstone in the House of Commons. —Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. xvii. page 371.

new government, or to any special object connected with it. If Clive and the committee thought it wise and beneficial to raise from this source a fund for paying the servants of the state, it was their duty to represent their views to their superiors at home, and to wait for their sanction or prohibition.* But after the strong opinion that had been expressed on the impolicy and injustice of the Company's servants engaging in those departments of trade, and while they continued to receive communications shewing that the views of the Court of Directors were unaltered,† they ought not at once, and of their

* As required by the Court, in despatch, dated 1st June, 1764, after Clive's appointment, and not long before his departure: "You are thereupon to form a proper and equitable plan for carrying on the said trade, and *transmit the same to us*, accompanied by such explanations, observations, and remarks, as *may enable us to give our sentiments and directions thereupon* in a full and explicit manner."

† Some passages have already been quoted from the letters of the Court on this subject. In a letter, dated the 15th February, 1765, the following occurs:—"In our letters of the 8th February and the 1st June last, we gave you our sentiments and directions very fully in respect to the inland trade of Bengal. We now enforce the same in the strongest manner, and positively insist that you take no steps whatever towards renewing this trade without our express leave, for which purpose you must not fail to give us the fullest information upon the subject agreeable to our above-mentioned directions." Again, in letter under date 24th December, 1765: "Your deliberations on the inland trade have laid open to us a scene of most cruel oppression, which is indeed exhibited at one view of the thirteenth article of the Nabob's complaints mentioned thus in your Consultations of the 17th October, 1764. 'The poor of this country, who used always to deal in salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, are now deprived of their daily bread by the trade of the Europeans, whereby no kind of advantage accrues to the Company, and the government's revenues are greatly

CHAP. VI. own authority, to have established a plan which there was ground for apprehending might be disapproved by those to whom they owed obedience. The second reason may be answered in the same manner. The evil was great. If Europeans are to labour for a mere subsistence, and that a scanty one, India is not the field in which they will choose to labour. If they apparently submit to the hard terms imposed upon them, the most ordinary knowledge of human nature will lead to the conviction that their submission is only apparent—that they are looking to indirect means to make up for the insufficiency of their remuneration; that when temptation arrives it will not be resisted; and that if its pace should be slow, its advance will be rather invited than repelled.* These things are clear, as

injured.' We shall for the present observe to you, that every one of our servants concerned in this trade has been guilty of a breach of his covenants, and a disobedience to our orders." Further, in the same letter: "We shall say nothing further at present on the inland trade till that important subject shall have been taken up by Lord Clive and the gentlemen of the select committee, only to observe that the regulation proposed in Consultation, 17th October, 1764, of confining the trade of our servants in the article of salt to the capital cities of Patna, Dacca, and Moorshedabad, on paying the Nabob 2½ per cent., is a manifest disobedience of our orders of the 8th February, then under your deliberation, which positively forbid all trade in salt, betel-nut, and tobacco."

* According to Clive's description of the process, temptation in the East is sufficiently active to satisfy those most ready to yield to it. "The Company's servants," said he, "have not been the authors of those acts of violence and oppression of which it is the fashion to accuse them. Such crimes are com-

well as true, and they furnished very proper grounds for pressing remonstrance to the authority under

mitted by the natives of the country, acting as their agents, and for the most part without their knowledge. Those agents and the banyans never desist till, according to the ministerial phrase, they have dragged their masters into the kennel, and then the acts of violence begin. The passion for gain is as strong as the passion of love." Clive pursues the parallel for some time; and after painting the situation of a man placed in circumstances of danger from the softer passion, he thus continues: "Now, the banyan is the fair lady to the Company's servant. He lays his bags of silver before him to-day; gold to-morrow; jewels the next day; and if these fail, he then tempts him, in the way of his profession, which is trade. He assures him that goods may be had cheap, and sold to great advantage up the country. In this manner is the attack carried on, and the Company's servant has no resource, for he cannot fly. In short, flesh and blood cannot bear it." Clive then adverts, with much truth, to the circumstances by which the way was then prepared for the temptation to prevail. "Let us for a moment consider the nature of the education of a young man who goes to India. The advantages arising from the Company's service are now very generally known, and the great object of every man is to get his son appointed a writer to Bengal, which is usually at the age of sixteen. His parents and relations represent to him how certain he is of making a fortune; that my lord such-a-one and my lord such-a-one acquired so much money in such a time, and Mr. such-a-one and Mr. such-a-one so much in such a time. Thus are their principles corrupted at their very setting out; and as they generally go a good many together, they inflame one another's expectations to such a degree in the course of the voyage, that they fix upon a period for their return before their arrival." Clive then delineates the writer's course in India. "Let us now take a view of one of these writers arrived in Bengal, and not worth a groat. As soon as he lands, a banyan, worth perhaps 100,000*l.*, desires he may have the honour of serving this young gentleman at 4*s.* 6*d.* per month. The Company has provided chambers for him, but they are not good enough—the banyan finds better. The young man takes a walk about the town; he

CHAP. VI. which Clive acted. Supported by his energy and influence, they could scarcely have failed to produce

observes that other writers, arrived only a year before him, live in splendid apartments, or have houses of their own, ride upon fine prancing Arabian horses, and in palanquins and chaises—that they keep seraglios, make entertainments, and treat with champagne and claret. When he returns, he tells the banyan what he has observed. The banyan assures him he may soon arrive at the same good fortune; he furnishes him with money; he is then at his mercy. The advantages of the banyan advance with the rank of his master, who, in acquiring one fortune, generally spends three. But this is not the worst of it: he is in a state of dependence under the banyan, who commits such acts of violence and oppression as his interest prompts him to, under the pretended sanction and authority of the Company's servant. Hence, Sir, arises the clamour against the English gentlemen in India." After thus pointing out the sources and operation of Indian corruption, Clive paid a generous and honourable tribute to the virtues of that body with whom he was so intimately connected, and among whom so large a portion of his life had been passed. "Look," said he, "at them (the Company's servants) in a retired situation, when returned to England, when they are no longer nabobs and sovereigns of the East; see if there be any thing tyrannical in their disposition towards their inferiors; see if they are not good and humane masters. Are they not charitable? are they not benevolent? are they not generous? are they not hospitable? If they are thus far not contemptible members of society, and if in all their dealings between man and man their conduct is strictly honourable; if, in short, there has not yet been one character found amongst them sufficiently flagitious for Mr. Foote to exhibit on the theatre in the Haymarket, may we not conclude that, if they have erred, it has been because they were men placed in situations subject to little or no control?"—Clive's Speech on East-India Judicature Bill, 30th March, 1772, Hansard's Parliamentary History, pages 355, 356. Foote, however, in his comedy of "The Nabob," exercised the license which he assumed with regard to all subjects, as well as all classes of society, and extended his satire in the direction which Clive seemed to think unassailable.

a proper effect; but for that effect he should have waited. He was the servant of the Company, not its master.

Clive, however, found employment of a different nature to that of bestowing fortunes on his friends, and carrying out the inland trade among the Company's servants. Whatever might be thought of these acts at home, they could not fail to be popular in India. Not so the reduction of the emoluments of the army, which was one of the duties imposed upon Clive by his instructions, and one which he was resolved to perform.

After the battle of Plassy, the Nabob Meer Jaffier had granted to the English troops whom he was to support double batta, or field allowance. When the mode of defraying the expenses of the army was changed, by the assignment to the Company of certain districts for the purpose, the Court of Directors ordered that double batta should be abolished. These instructions, though often repeated, had never been carried into effect; and, as in the case of the covenants against the receipt of presents, it remained for Clive to enforce orders which apathy, or fear, or inclination had previously permitted to slumber. The select committee accordingly issued an order, directing that, from the 1st January, 1766, double batta should cease, except at Allahabad, where, on account of the distance from Calcutta, the allowance was to be continued while the troops were actually in the field, but was to be reduced to single batta when they retired into cantonments. At

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Patna and Mongheer the troops were to have half batta when not on service. At the presidency they were to be placed on the same footing as at Madras; they were to draw no batta, except when actually marching or serving in the field. Against this order remonstrance was offered, but in vain. The order was enforced; and the enforcement led to a wide-spread conspiracy among the European officers, organized with much care and great secresy, the object of which was the simultaneous resignation of their commissions on a given day. The details of this discreditable business would afford neither instruction nor pleasure; the subject may, therefore, be passed over with more than ordinary brevity. Clive exerted himself vigorously to repress the mutinous movement; he was ably supported by Sir Robert Barker and Colonel A. Smith, who commanded two of the three brigades into which the army was divided. The remaining brigade was commanded by Sir Robert Fletcher; and he, it was discovered, though not until the mutiny was very far advanced, was the contriver and instigator of the guilty proceedings. He was brought to a court-martial, convicted, and cashiered—a lenient punishment, considered with reference to his aggravated guilt, and to the fatal consequences that might have followed his treacherous desertion of duty. A few officers of inferior rank were also brought to trial, and sentenced to punishment;* the remainder were per-

* The fact that none of the offenders were sentenced to death, is stated to have arisen from a misconstruction of the Mutiny Act. See Memoirs of Clive, vol. iii. p. 71.

mitted to enjoy the benefits of timely penitence, by restoration to their commissions. CHAP. VI.

At the time that Clive was engaged in recalling the army to their duty, he had an opportunity of evincing his regard for that body by a liberal donation for its benefit. On his arrival from England, he was informed that Meer Jaffier had bequeathed to him five lacs of rupees, which were in the hands of Munny Begum, the mother of the reigning prince. He at first hesitated as to receiving the legacy, on the ground, as he stated, that he had pledged his word that he would not benefit himself, directly or indirectly, by the government of India. But at the time of enforcing the order for the discontinuance of double batta, he determined to accept the bequest, and apply it to the formation of a military fund for invalid officers and soldiers, and their widows. This legacy formed one of the subjects of inquiry when Clive's conduct in India was submitted to parliamentary investigation. The fact of any such bequest having been made by Meer Jaffier was denied; and, supposing it had, the right of Clive to benefit by it, after the prohibition of the receipt of presents, was disputed. The bequest was certainly involved in some mystery: but those who had to pay the money do not appear to have objected; and if they had any personal object in heaping wealth upon Clive, they shewed great disinterestedness in renouncing the credit of their own liberality, and placing it to the account of a dead prince. In itself, moreover, the bequest was not altogether improbable. Meer

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Jaffier owed every thing to Clive; and when he reflected on the treatment which he had met from Clive's successors, as contrasted with that which he had experienced from the great European soldier, he might naturally be desirous of marking his sense of the difference by some indication of his gratitude to Clive. There seems nothing, therefore, in the circumstances of the case that could render the acceptance of the legacy dishonourable; and a covenant prohibiting presents could not, according to the letter, be applied to a testamentary bequest.* There was little reason, however, for raising any question on the subject, as the acceptance and appropriation of the money were sanctioned by the Court of Directors, and as no part of it was applied by Clive to his own use, or to the benefit of his personal friends.† If all his pecuniary transactions had been equally free from reproach, his memory in this respect would have stood clear of any imputation that could cast a shade upon it.‡

* An opinion favourable to Clive's right to receive the bequest, irrespective of the consent of the Court of Directors, was given by Sir Fletcher Norton, one of the most distinguished lawyers of the time.

† In the agreement under which the deed was settled, there was a provision that, in case of the failure of Clive's interest in his jaghire, the five lacs should revert to him; subject, however, to a just proportion of the charges upon the fund. In one of the parliamentary committees, Clive was asked whether this clause was of no value? He answered sharply, "It will be time enough to answer that question when the money is received and disposed of by me." Fifth Report.

‡ The fund thus formed was subsequently increased by a donation of three lacs of rupees from the successor of Noojum-a-

In April, 1766, in conformity with ancient custom, the Nabob held his poonah, or annual court for the adjustment of the zemindary accounts. The forms proper to this anniversary were rigidly observed, and nothing was wanting of its accustomed state and splendour. The prince sate as nazim, and Clive, as the representative of the Company, appeared as dewan, or collector of the imperial revenues.* Noojum-ad-Dowlah never assisted at another ceremony of like nature. In May he was seized with malignant fever, which his constitution and habits were little adapted to overcome, and which in a few days put an end to his life. His brother, Syef-ad-Dowlah, was placed on the throne, and the opportunity was embraced of effecting a considerable reduction in the royal expenditure.† A. D. 1766.

Dowlah, and it has since been supported by the Company with great liberality.

* Letter from Lord Clive, General Carnac, and Mr. Sykes, to Governor and Council of Fort William, 30th April, 1766. Appendix, No. 102. Third Report.

† As it was a prevalent opinion at this time that Eastern princes never died from natural causes, the death of Noojum-ad-Dowlah was ascribed to poison, and the English Government was accused of preparing it. The tale was the offspring of pure malignity, and was unsupported by a tittle of evidence or a shade of probability. There was nothing remarkable in the death of Noojum-ad-Dowlah, and no individual of the English Government profited by the event. A saving was effected to the Company; but men are not often poisoned for the benefit of corporations. It may be added, that the character of Clive ought to have exempted him from suspicion. On many occasions he shewed himself sufficiently unscrupulous; but his was not the hand to prepare the poisoned bowl, nor the heart to consent to its employment.

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Clive had regarded his mission to India as an extraordinary one, and from the first had meditated returning at no remote period. He had found less occasion for exertion than he could have anticipated, and the little that remained for him to perform had been accomplished. Peace had been concluded with the Vizier; the position of the Company and the Nabob towards each other had been fixed, as well as that of both with regard to the Emperor; the covenants against the receipt of presents had been enforced, and the inland trade—not prohibited, indeed, till the pleasure of the Court of Directors could be known—but regulated, according to Clive's views, with some regard to equity. There was thus little left for him to perform, and the state of his health rendered him anxious not to protract his stay in India. He had renewed the arrangements for carrying on the inland trade for a second year, in spite of the denunciations received from home; but at length the orders of the Court of Directors became too peremptory to be disregarded by a man whose friends were about to solicit for him further favours from the East-India Company; to whom, consequently, the influence of the governing body was important, and who could not decently appear as a candidate for reward in the character of a contumacious servant. One of the latest acts of Clive's government was to give orders for the abolition of the society of private trade from the period when the existing contracts expired. The dispatch reporting this tardy act of obedience was dated the 24th January; and

A. D. 1767.

before the month expired Clive quitted Bengal for ever. He had no reason to complain of the reception which awaited him at home. On being introduced to the Court of Directors, he received from the chairman a warm assurance of the approval and satisfaction of the Court. In the general court, his merits were acknowledged by a recommendation to grant to him and his representatives the enjoyment of his jaghire for an additional period of ten years, to commence from the expiration of the former term. The recommendation was adopted, and the grant formally made. As this gift must be regarded in the light of a reward for Clive's services during his last government, it is difficult to understand how he reconciled his acceptance of it with his often-repeated determination not to derive any pecuniary advantage from the appointment.

A. D. 1767.

The public life of Clive may now be regarded as at an end. He was subsequently called upon to answer for much in which he had been culpable, and for some things in which he was blameless. These inquiries, for the most part, originated in factious and discreditable motives; neither the accusers nor the accused appear in a favourable light —personal hostility and political intrigue prompted the charges—while Clive, in repelling them, is no longer the soldier whose cannon had shaken the thrones of Hindostan to their foundations, nor the statesman who had raised a goodly edifice of British power upon their ruins, but occupies the undignified position of a man who, having amassed

CHAP. VI. boundless wealth by means not always defensible, is resolved to struggle to the death for its preservation. In India the very magnitude of Clive's errors gave them something of greatness—at home, apart from the imperishable wreath of military renown which faction could not tear from his brow, there appears little to distinguish him from the mass of successful Indian fortune-hunters.

The reader who looks back upon the scenes through which he has been conducted, will at once perceive that it is on his military character that Clive's reputation must rest. All the qualities of a soldier were combined in him, and each so admirably proportioned to the rest, that none predominated to the detriment of any other. His personal courage enabled him to acquire a degree of influence over his troops which has rarely been equalled, and which in India was before his time unknown; and this, united with the cool and consummate judgment by which his daring energy was controlled and regulated, enabled him to effect conquests which, if they had taken place in remote times, would be regarded as incredible. Out of materials the most unpromising he had to create the instruments for effecting these conquests, and he achieved his object where all men but himself might have despaired. No one can dwell upon the more exciting portions of his history without catching some portion of the ardour which led him through these stirring scenes; no one who loves the country for which he fought can recall them to memory

without mentally breathing—honour to the name of Clive. In India his fame is greater even than at home, and that fame is not his merely—it is his country's.

Well had it been for Clive, well had it been for the country which he so nobly served, if his brilliant qualities as a soldier had not been alloyed by any base admixture. It was not to be expected that he should be exempt from all touch of human weakness, but his failings were such as could scarcely have been believed to co-exist with the admirable military virtues which he possessed and exercised. They were not the splendid infirmities of an aspiring spirit, but the mean propensities which might be thought incompatible with greatness of mind. In the field, daring, self-denying, and self-devoted, Clive seemed a miracle of chivalrous valour—but the hero was assumed and cast off with the occasion; and he whose noble bearing fixed the admiration of nations, and decided the fortune of thrones, could descend to the exercise of trickery and rapacity equal to that of the banyan, so accurately and powerfully depicted by himself in one of his parliamentary speeches.* While history preserves the name of Omichund, the reputation of Clive must labour under a foul and fearful blot; while men remember the means by which his princely fortune was accumulated, their admiration of his genius and courage will be qualified, in gentler minds by a feeling of

* See note on page 508 et seq.

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pity for his weakness, in those of sterner cast by indignation and scorn. Clive spoke of the love of wealth as one of the master passions of the human heart, and his conduct leads to the belief that, in this instance, he was no cold rhetorician—that he spoke as he felt. He was enslaved by the demon to whose power he bore witness, and the effects of his thraldom are discernible in almost every action of his life. Grasping in India gold, jewels, and jaghire, with more than Oriental avidity—communicating secret intelligence to his agents at home to enable them to make favourable bargains in India Stock—every where private interest and plans for self-aggrandisement are mixed up with the highest public objects. Yet while truth requires that his undue appetite for wealth be noted, justice demands that it be at the same time recorded that this passion, powerful as it was, never interfered with his duty to his country. When his personal interest and the honour of the British name were opposed, he could, apparently without an effort, expel from his breast the ravening spirit which usually possessed it, and cast the darling passion of his soul a willing offering at the shrine of patriotism. When he determined to resist by force the hostile demonstrations of the Dutch the greater part of his fortune was in their hands. He thought not of this; or, if the thought occurred, it was only to be despised. Clive, indeed, loved wealth too well, but he loved his country better. A mind

sometimes soaring so far above the level of human nature, and sometimes sinking so much below it, is rarely to be found.

As a statesman, Clive's vision was clear, but not extensive. He could promptly and adroitly adapt his policy to the state of things which he found existing; but none of his acts display any extraordinary political sagacity. Turning from his claims in a field where his talents command but a moderate degree of respect, and where the means by which he sometimes sought to serve the state and sometimes to promote his own interests give rise to a very different feeling, it is due to one to whom his country is so deeply indebted, to close the narrative of his career by recurring once more to that part of his character which may be contemplated with unmixed satisfaction. As a soldier he was pre-eminently great. With the name of Clive commences the flood of glory which has rolled on till it has covered the wide face of India with memorials of British valour. By Clive was formed the base of the column which a succession of heroes, well worthy to follow in his steps, have carried upward to a towering height, and surrounded with trophies of honour, rich, brilliant, and countless.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAP. VII. SOON after the British possessions on the coast of Coromandel had been placed in some degree of security by the reduction of Pondicherry, and the annihilation of the French interests in the Carnatic, the ministers of the crown projected an expedition against Manilla, a Spanish settlement, and the capital of the Phillippine Islands. The East-India Company were invited to aid in this object, and the government of Madras, in consequence, furnished about two thousand men for the purpose. General Lawrence remonstrated against the draft of so large a force, which he thought inconsistent with the safety of the British interests on the coast; but his opinion was overruled. Part of the force left Ma-

A. D. 1762. dras at the latter end of July, 1762, and the remainder in the beginning of August, several civil servants of the Company accompanying, to take possession of the anticipated conquests. The land forces engaged in the expedition were commanded by General Draper,* the naval force by Admiral

* Afterwards Sir William Draper, K.B., distinguished as one of the earliest, as well as one of the ablest, of the antagonists of the spectral author of the Letters of Junius.

Cornish. The operations against Manilla occupied twelve days, when it was taken by storm with very trivial loss. Articles were subsequently signed by the British commanders and the Spanish authorities, by which the private property of the inhabitants was secured, and the Spanish officers admitted to parole. On the other hand, all the dependencies of Manilla were to be surrendered, as well as all military stores, and a sum amounting to about a million sterling to be paid by way of ransom, one-half immediately.* Manilla was restored to Spain at the general peace in the following year, and neither the East-India Company nor the British derived much advantage from the capture. That peace also restored to the French their former possessions on the continent of India—a most unwise concession on the part of the British negotiators, who ought to have been more alive to the interests of their own countrymen in the East than to suffer their intriguing and restless neighbours to regain the means of assailing them.

A. D. 1763.

In the meantime the government of Madras had been engaged in assisting Mahomed Ali in reducing several rebellious vassals to obedience. The object was effected with a tolerable degree of ease, except in the case of Madura, which was held in opposition

* This moiety was all that was ever obtained. The court of Spain resisted the payment of the remainder under various pretences. Sir William Draper for a time pressed the claim by representations to the ministers, and by appeals to the public, but it is one of the charges of Junius against him, that he subsequently neglected the interests of his companions in arms.

CHAP. VII. to his master by Mahomed Isoof, formerly a distinguished, and it was believed an attached, follower of the English. The siege of Madura was both tedious and expensive; but it ultimately fell, and Mahomed Isoof paid the ordinary penalty of rebellion in the surrender of his life.

Another subject, which threatened to disturb the peace of that part of India, was a dispute between Mahomed Ali and the sovereign of Tanjore, relating to the repairs of a mound by which the waters of the river Cavery were protected. By the mediation of the British Government the quarrel was arranged, and this cause of hostility removed.

But the energies of the British Government were not long to be expended solely in reducing dependent chiefs to obedience, or arranging personal disputes between princes of greater dignity and dominion. A man of comparatively obscure origin was rising into notice, and gradually increasing that power which subsequently swept over a large portion of the south of India with the rapidity and withering influence of a destructive meteor. Hyder, the new candidate for conquest and dominion, has already been mentioned as affording temporary assistance to the French cause at Pondicherry.* He was the son of a man who had held the dignity of a foujdar, but who, in one of those revolutions which are of such frequent occurrence in India, had lost his life—an event followed by the plunder of his family of all that they possessed. At this time

* See page 347.

Hyder was not more than seven years of age. His advance towards manhood gave little indication of future greatness, and for some time after he had reached the period of maturity his life was totally devoted to pleasure. The sports of the field occupied a large portion of his time, the remainder was surrendered to voluptuous enjoyments. He had an elder brother, who at an early period of life had obtained military employment in the service of Mysore. It was not till Hyder had completed his twenty-seventh year that he entered upon a similar course of life, by joining his brother's corps as a volunteer. Here he soon distinguished himself by the display of extraordinary courage, and of a degree of coolness and self-possession not less admirable. In time he advanced to the command of a body of freebooters whom he had collected around him, who might, says Colonel Wilks, "well be characterised as brave and faithful thieves. In the ordinary circumstances of a campaign," it is added, "they more than realized the charges of their establishment by a variety of plunder and simple theft from friends, when the enemy did not offer convenient means."* Hyder thus commenced his march to empire in the same manner as the distinguished founder of the Mahrattas, and his little band followed their avocation with a zeal, spirit, and success, not inferior to that displayed by the adherents of the illustrious Sevajee. In the confusion that ensued on the death of Nazir

* Historical Sketches of the South of India, vol. i., p. 269.

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Jung,* these adventurers, bold, faithful, and furtive, managed to mix with the crowd near the treasure of the deceased prince, which the treasurer had began to load on the first alarm. But the caution and promptitude of the officer did not prevent the separation of two camels loaded with gold coin, which before order was restored were clear of the outposts, and considerably advanced on their way towards the head-quarters of Hyder. Horses, muskets, and other spoil of inferior note, travelled in the same direction. Subsequently the number of Hyder's predatory troops was considerably increased, and with the aid of a brahmin, distinguished by his proficiency alike in calculation and in all the arts of crooked policy, a plan was devised for the regular organization and government of this extraordinary force, so as to at once promote their active devotion to the service and to secure to their chief a great proportion of the fruits of their ingenuity and daring. The men, besides their direct pay, were to receive one half the booty which was realized; the remainder was appropriated to Hyder, and its faithful delivery secured by a system of checks, which rendered it nearly impossible to defraud the captain of his due. Under these excellent arrangements the trade of Hyder flourished wonderfully; his power and his resources increased; his stock of elephants, camels, tents, and equipments, enabled him to vie in this respect with the great chiefs in the state of Mysore, and finally he was admitted to rank with them by being nomi-

* See page 92.

nated foujdar of Dindigul, with a right to all the incidents attendant on the appointment. Hyder proceeded, at the head of a considerable force, to suppress a confederacy formed by the Polygars in the neighbourhood to resist the payment of tribute, and he succeeded. The news of his success was conveyed to court in terms which did not diminish its importance nor veil the difficulties which the victorious commander had surmounted; and the despatch was closed by a formidable list of killed and wounded. So satisfactory was the intelligence, and so great the admiration felt for the commander and his troops, that a special messenger was dispatched with rich presents for the officers who had distinguished themselves, and a sum of money to be applied to the relief of the wounded men. To guard against imposition (for it was felt that precaution was not unnecessary), an inspection was to take place. The actual number of wounded was sixty-seven. Hyder thought that the honour of his arms required that the return which he had made should be supported. To effect this he caused to be mingled with the real sufferers seven hundred men, whose limbs, though uninjured, were enveloped in bandages of formidable size, and these passed muster just as well as the rest. The allowance which the commissioner was authorized to distribute was at the rate of fourteen rupees per month for each man till cured. An estimate was made by the surgeons in attendance of the probable time that the cure of each would require, and according to the estimate and the mus-

CHAP. VII. ter the money was paid. The liberality of Hyder bestowed on each of the really wounded seven rupees per month, being one half of the amount which he received—what he gave to those who masqueraded for his honour and profit is not stated, but it may be hoped that he did not leave them altogether without reward. The distribution of the presents to the officers was made on the same principle as the donation to the wounded. While Hyder was thus employed, his faithful brahmin remained at court, sometimes sounding the praises of his master, sometimes dwelling on the difficulties of his situation, and urging the necessity of increasing his force. Augmentations were accordingly authorized from time to time, and assignments of revenue made for the support of the new levies. Special commissioners were always deputed to watch the musters, but the adroitness of Hyder frustrated their vigilance. On one occasion he performed a manœuvre, termed, by a native who witnessed it, "a circular muster," the result of which was, that ten thousand men were counted and passed as eighteen thousand.

Hyder continued to rise, and circumstances favoured his elevation. A mutiny broke out in the Mysorean army, and he was the instrument of suppressing it. On this occasion he made the opportune discovery that some of the richest chiefs were among the ringleaders. Their wealth, by a severe but necessary act of justice, was declared forfeited; and it need not be doubted that the coffers of Hyder benefited by this act, as well as the treasury of his

master. An opulent chief, named Herri Sing, had been dispatched to collect revenue in Malabar. Failing to effect his object, and entertaining a rooted dislike to Hyder, now one of the most powerful persons in the court of Mysore, Herri Sing was negotiating to enter the service of Tanjore. While thus engaged, he was unexpectedly attacked in the dead of night by a body of about three thousand men dispatched by Hyder. The chief and a large portion of his men fell, and the plunder was of great value. Hyder presented to his sovereign three guns and fifteen horses—the remainder he bestowed on himself. About the same time, by pressing his services on the notice of the court, Hyder obtained the district of Bangalore as a personal jaghire. A demonstration on the part of the Mahrattas afforded opportunity for the further display of Hyder's talents for rising in the state. The army was ordered to march to resist the incursion; but most of the chiefs represented that they were unable to obey the order, in consequence of the arrears of pay. Hyder, who knew that the amount of arrears due to the men was very small, liberally offered to become responsible for it; he was thereupon nominated to the chief command of the field army. The appointment was so disagreeable to the chiefs of ancient family, that many of them resigned their commands. Hyder was successful in reducing the Mahrattas to propose terms. The payment to them of a sum of money, in redemption of some districts formerly ceded in pledge, was one of the

conditions; and Hyder, with the aid of his confidential brahmin, procured the means of fulfilling it. He then returned in triumph to Seringapatam, where he was received with a degree of distinction far from usual, and with a demonstration of enthusiasm perhaps unprecedented in an Oriental court. Nunjeraj, says Colonel Wilks, "paid him the novel compliment of rising on his approach and embracing him, apparently proud of this public justification of his own discernment in the elevation of Hyder."*

But neither the warmth of the minister's friendship, nor the favours which he had bestowed upon Hyder, precluded the latter from intriguing against his benefactor. Nunjeraj had long exercised uncontrolled all the authority of the state. The Rajah and his family were disgusted by his arrogance, but distrustful of their own power to remove him. The means were suggested by the widow of a deceased relative of the royal house, in conjunction with Hyder's wily brahmin: Hyder, it will be justly concluded, was to play an important part in the project, and derive the greater share of the advantage in the event of its success. The grievance, ever occurring in Oriental armies, of unliquidated arrears of pay, was to afford the means of accomplishing the object. Some chiefs were admitted to such a portion of the confidence of the conspirators as was necessary to render them proper instruments of their wishes, but no more; and their troops in consequence proceeded to Hyder's quarters, and

* Historical Sketches, vol. i. page 373.

demanded payment of their arrears. Hyder, with great mildness and apparent sympathy, replied, that his own corps, for which he possessed fixed resources, was regularly paid, but that he had no concern with the funds out of which the pay of the rest of the army ought to be defrayed. The applicants then requested that he would obtain payment for them from the person whose duty it was to see their claims discharged — that person being Nunjeraj. Hyder could not refuse his good offices to procure justice to his companions in arms, but nothing followed. The visits of the troops were repeated till their patience was at an end; when they insisted on Hyder going at their head to perform a superstitious ceremony called *dhurna*, with a view of extorting from the fears of Nunjeraj that redress which they were unable to obtain by other means.* Hyder

* This is a Hindoo ceremony, and should be performed by a brahmin; but the mixture of Hindoos and Mussulmen in most parts of India has produced, to a certain degree, a mixture of customs. Nunjeraj was a Hindoo, but Hyder was a Mussulman, and in strictness had no pretension to officiate at all in the ceremony. It is to be presumed that he was regarded as the representative of the discontented troops, a large portion of whom were undoubtedly of the same race as Nunjeraj. The following extracts relating to the ceremony as practised in the north-western parts of India are from a paper by the late Lord Teynmouth:—

"The brahmin who adopts this expedient for the purpose mentioned, proceeds to the door or house of the person against whom it is directed, or wherever he may most conveniently intercept him; he there sits down in *dhurna*, with poison, or a poignard, or some other instrument of suicide, in his hand, and threatening to use it if his adversary should attempt to molest, or pass him, he thus completely arrests him. In this situation the

CHAP. VII. expressed great repugnance; but fear of the mutineers, or some other motive, induced him to comply. Nunjeraj had gained some knowledge of the interviews between the dowager and the brahmin. The presence of Hyder as chief actor in the *dhurna* unlocked the mystery; and Nunjeraj shrunk from a contest with a man whose greatness he believed was destined to be raised on the ruins of his own. An interview between the late friends took place, and the descent of Nunjeraj from the seat of power was arranged. The vanquished minister presented himself to the troops, and informed them that the misfortunes of his government had determined him to

brahmin fasts, and by the rigour of the etiquette, which is rarely infringed, the unfortunate object of his arrest ought also to fast; and thus they both remain until the institutor of the *dhurna* obtains satisfaction. In this, as he seldom makes the attempt without resolution to persevere, he rarely fails, for if the party thus arrested were to suffer the brahmin sitting in *dhurna* to perish by hunger, the sin would for ever lie on his head.

"It is not unworthy of remark that some of the pundits, on being consulted, admitted the validity of an obligation extorted by *dhurna*, provided the object were to obtain a just cause or right, wickedly withheld by the other party, but not otherwise. Others again rejected the validity of an engagement so extorted, unless it should be subsequently confirmed by the writer, either in whole or in part, after the removal of the coercion upon him.

"In January, 1794, Mohun Panreh, an inhabitant of a district in the province of Benares, sat down in *dhurna* before the house of some Rajpoots, for the purpose of obtaining the payment of birt, or a charitable subsistence, to which he had a claim, and in this situation destroyed himself by swallowing poison. Some of the relations of the deceased retained his corpse for two days before the house of the Rajpoots, who thus were compelled to forego taking sustenance in order to induce them to settle the birt on the heir of the deceased brahmin."

bow to the decrees of fate; that the Rajah had accordingly assumed the principal direction of his own affairs, with the express view of permitting the retirement of his servant; that all his arrangements were made for rendering his accounts and resigning his office, and that under these circumstances it was unjust to hold him responsible for any pecuniary claim upon the Rajah's treasury. The effect of this explanation had not been left to chance. Some of the soldiers, duly trained, called out to remove the *dhurna* to the gate of the Rajah. The proposal was received with acclamations; the steps of the discontented troops were directed to the palace, and Hyder, less unwilling than before, was compelled to lead them.

At the palace the business of the scene had been pre-arranged with much attention. A messenger came out and requested that Koonde Row, the ever-active brahmin, might be sent to communicate with the Rajah. The brahmin went, and returned with a promise from the Rajah to find means of satisfying the demands of the troops, on condition that Hyder should take a solemn oath to renounce all connexion with the usurper, Nunjeraj. Hyder, deeply affected by the command to abandon his friend, pretended not to conceal the pain which it gave him; but he took the oath, and thereupon was admitted to an audience of the sovereign. He returned and informed the troops that to complete the arrangements for satisfying their claims would require a few days, but in the mean time he tendered his personal responsi-

CHAP. VII. bility as security. This was readily accepted, and the tumultuous crowd disappeared. To enable Hyder to discharge the obligation thus incurred, additional assignments of revenue were made to him, and the territories under his administration thus came to exceed half of the entire dominions of the Rajah.

It was soon after he had reached this elevation of power that he dispatched a force to assist the French at Pondicherry, as already mentioned.* The main cause of the precipitate retirement of that force, was the danger which threatened his newly acquired greatness from the jealousy and discontent of those by whose aid he had acquired it. The female contriver of the plot perceived that the only effect of the removal of Nunjeraj had been to invest a more dangerous man with the same plenitude of power which had been exercised by the deposed minister. The brahmin, who had been appointed to the office of dewan, began to regard the encroachments of his late patron with some degree of distaste. The two persons who not long before had raised Hyder to his lofty position, now conspired to pluck him down, and advantage was taken of the absence of a large part of his troops. Hyder was cantoned under the fire of the garrison of Seringapatam, with about one hundred horse and fifteen hundred infantry, and notwithstanding his usual caution, was unsuspicious of the storm that was gathering around him. He was only awakened to a knowledge of it by a tremendous cannonade from all the works that bore

* See pages 347, 349.

on his position. His first impulse was to send for his friend the brahmin—he was informed that the person whose presence he sought was on the works directing the fire of the artillery. The attack upon Hyder was to have been aided by six thousand Mahrattas, but they, "according to custom, did not arrive at the appointed time."* Some communications took place between Hyder and the Rajah's dewan, and it is said that the brahmin pointed out the way to retreat, and left the spot unguarded, that Hyder might retire in safety. However this may be, Hyder did retire with his cavalry and a portion of his treasure. His family were left behind, and these with the infantry and considerable property fell into the hands of his enemies. The soldier of fortune was now again thrown upon the world. It would be inconsistent with the design of this sketch to follow in detail his various movements, but one was too extraordinary and characteristic to be passed over. Having been defeated by a force commanded by his former friend the brahmin, he suddenly presented himself alone and unarmed as a supplicant at the door of Nunjeraj. Being admitted to the presence of the retired minister, Hyder threw himself at his feet, and in strains of grief and penitence besought of him forgiveness. All the misfortunes that had thronged on Hyder he professed to regard as the just punishment of his ingratitude to his kind and generous patron, whom he implored to resume his place at the head of the state, and receive his old

* Colonel Wilks's Historical Sketches, vol. i., page 417.

CHAP. VII. servant once more under his protection. Nunjeraj was not without experience of the value of such protestations, and of the sincerity of his friend; but he afforded a fresh instance of the influence which men's wishes exercise over their understanding. He consented to make common cause with Hyder, to aid him with a considerable body of horse and foot which he had collected during his seclusion, and to give to the man to whose treachery he owed his descent from power all the benefit of his name and influence. Hyder made use of the former without reserve. Some time after his reconciliation with Nunjeraj, being closely pressed by the brahmin Koonde Row, he forged letters in the name and with the seal of his ally addressed to the principal leaders in the army of his enemy. These referred to an engagement assumed to have been made for the delivery of Koonde Row into the hands of Nunjeraj, promised on the part of the latter the reward alleged to be agreed upon, and intimated that nothing now remained but for the conspirators to earn it. The bearer of these letters was made prisoner, as was intended, and his charge placed in the hands of the general. The success of the forgery was equal to that of Hyder's feigned penitence. Koonde Row was completely deceived; he mounted his horse and rode at full speed to the capital, without deigning to hold any intercourse with the suspected chiefs. The flight of the general under any circumstances is calculated to spread panic through his army; it was in this case the more alarming, as

the cause could not even be conjectured. The thoughts of every one were turned to his own safety, and when dismay and confusion had attained a sufficient height, Hyder fell upon his enemy's army in front and rear and gained a complete and easy victory. CHAP. VII.

Hyder now vigorously applied himself to destroy the remnants of the royal army and to strengthen his own. He was soon in a condition to dictate terms to the Rajah. The arrangement actually concluded gave to the successful adventurer every thing but the title of sovereign. Districts sufficient to provide a moderate revenue for the personal expenses of the Rajah and Nunjeraj were reserved for those purposes; the entire management of the remainder of the country and all the functions of government were transferred to Hyder. Koonde Row was surrendered to the conqueror, who imprisoned him in an iron cage.*

Hyder's honours now flowed thickly upon him. For some services rendered to Basalat Jung in the reduction of a small fort, and in consideration of a present of no great amount, that potentate created

* Before the surrender of Koonde Row, the Rajah and the ladies of the palace (with whom the brahmin appears to have stood in extraordinary favour) joined in entreating mercy towards Hyder's former friend. Hyder answered that he would not only spare his life, but cherish him like a parroquet. When afterwards reminded of this, he replied, that he had literally kept his word, and referred in proof to the cage in which the prisoner was confined, and the allowance of rice and milk allowed for his subsistence.—Wilks's Historical Sketches.

Hyder Nabob of Sera, although he had neither possession nor right in respect to the country bestowed. The new Nabob was designated as Hyder Ali Khan Bahadur, and thenceforth used those appellations. Having asserted his right to the dignity conferred upon him, by reducing the countries from which his title was derived, he engaged in an invasion of Bednore, for the alleged purpose of restoring to the throne a youth who pretended to have been unjustly excluded from it. In his progress he rarely met resistance, and when so unusual a circumstance occurred it was requited by severity calculated to discourage its repetition. A hundred men occupying a small fort ventured to fire on his troops. They were surrounded and taken, and so far nothing occurred which they might not have expected; but after being made prisoners their temerity was punished by cutting off their noses and ears, and in this state they were dismissed to spread the terror of the invader's army. Four, twelve, and eighteen lacs of pagodas were successively offered to purchase Hyder's retreat, but in vain. He penetrated to the capital of the province, a place which it is said previously formed a happy exception to the common lot of India, in having no experience of the horrors of war. The palace and treasury were set on fire by their inmates, and the inhabitants of the town fled to the woods and mountains for security. The flames of the palace were subdued in time to save much that was valuable to the victor, and the troops, who had

begun to pillage the city, were taught to respect the superior claims of the giant plunderer whom they served. In a few hours the door of every dwelling above the condition of a hovel was secured by the official seal of Hyder Ali, and respect for this stamp of authority maintained by a suitable guard. Within the town, which was about eight miles in circumference, were stored the accumulations of many years of extensive and profitable commerce, and the most moderate estimate of the amount of plunder realized by Hyder Ali fixes it at twelve millions sterling. This vast treasure secured, the conqueror dropped the mask under which the war had been carried on, and assumed his natural character. A former rajah had left the throne to an adopted son, constituting the Ranee or queen his guardian during the period of his minority. The widow formed a criminal attachment, which was manifested so publicly as to outrage decorum not less than morality; and the young Rajah having remarked on her frailty somewhat too freely, his reproofs were silenced by the hand of an assassin. The person whom Hyder had taken under his protection pretended to be the Rajah who had been thus removed, and ascribed his escape to the mercy of the man employed to dispatch him, by whom he represented himself as having been secreted during five years. It is not probable that Hyder Ali ever gave credence to the tale, but it suited his purpose to affect belief in it. That purpose being answered by the conquest of Bednore, the pretended prince was sent

CHAP. VII. a close prisoner to a fortress a hundred and eighty miles to the eastward of the capital. His confinement was solaced by the company of the Ranee, her paramour, and a child, whom they had placed on the throne after the murder of its lawful occupant. Hyder Ali did not enjoy his conquest without molestation. While labouring under an attack of ague, a disorder common in the country, a confederacy was formed to dispossess and assassinate him. It was detected, and three hundred of the conspirators hanged. After this operation, it is stated that Hyder Ali's health visibly improved.

Subsequently, Hyder Ali suffered severely in contests with the Mahrattas, and was at length shut up within the lines of Bednore. He succeeded in obtaining peace on terms not unfavourable, considered with regard to his situation; and having quelled various manifestations of insurrection, which his late unprosperous circumstances had encouraged in different parts of his dominions, his restless and aggressive spirit was turned to the conquest of Malabar. The operations of Hyder Ali were there marked by the same character which distinguished the course of his arms elsewhere—the most odious perfidy, the most oppressive extortion, and the most intolerable cruelty. He succeeded in overrunning the country and procuring a nominal submission to his authority, after which he returned to Seringapatam. The Rajah had died while Hyder was absent in Malabar, but this was too trivial a circumstance to interrupt the conqueror in his career. He sent

orders for securing the succession to the eldest son of the deceased prince, with as much indifference as if the subject of his instructions had been the appointment of a domestic servant. On his return, he went through the form of rendering homage to the prisoner, whom he called his sovereign; but, at the same time, he resumed the districts which had been allotted for the support of the Rajah, and plundered the palace of all the money and articles of value which it contained. So complete was the latter operation, that nothing worth carrying away escaped the hands of the pillagers, except such of the ornaments of the female inmates as they happened to have upon their persons when the clearance took place. As the Rajah was now a pensioner upon Hyder Ali, his establishments were subjected to a rigorous revision, so as to reduce the expenditure to the lowest possible amount, and none were permitted to have access to the prince but the creatures of his keeper.

The politics of the Deccan at this period, and for some years preceding the return of Hyder Ali to Mysore, present an entangled web, of which it is scarcely practicable to render a clear account.

Some intercourse had taken place between Hyder and the government of Bombay, which on the whole was not of an unfriendly character. On his return to Seringapatam, however, he found the government of Madras in league with Nizam Ali against him. The principal events connected with this alliance may be related in a few words; the appropriation

CHAP. VII. of a volume to the object would not afford the means of giving a satisfactory and lucid exposition of their causes, or of the motives of the actors engaged in them. It may be doubted whether the persons then forming the British government of Madras understood their own policy; and it is quite certain that to all others it must ever remain inexplicable.

The possession of the districts called the Northern Circars was an object, for various reasons, desirable to the English. Salabat Jung, Nizam Ali, and Basalat Jung, the three brothers who contended for sovereignty in the Deccan, had all tendered these provinces as the price of assistance, but a desire not to enter into Indian politics further than necessary rendered the government of Madras unwilling to accept the proffered gift from any of them. In the contest for supreme power in the Deccan, the fortune of Nizam Ali finally prevailed, and Salabat Jung became his prisoner.* With the reigning prince the British government continued to maintain a negotiation singularly vague in its character, till they were assured that the title of Nizam Ali had been confirmed by the Emperor. They then ventured to take an assignment of the management of the Circars from the former on the terms of a division of the profits. When Nizam Ali concluded this arrangement he was in fear of the Mahrattas; having concluded a truce with those troublesome

* The treaty of Paris, concluded in 1763, recognized Salabat Jung as the lawful Soubahdar of the Deccan. He had then for about two years been imprisoned by his brother, Nizam Ali, by whom he was eventually murdered.

enemies, he proceeded unceremoniously to annul the agreement with the English government, who patiently submitted. Negotiation was renewed, but without effect, and the coveted districts were committed to the charge of a person named Hoossein Ali, by whom they had before been rented. The circumstances in which the country had for some time been placed had naturally produced the greatest anarchy and confusion. The authority of Hoossein Ali was, therefore, little more than nominal; and to prevent the intrusion of the French the British government, in 1765, agreed to aid him in establishing his authority. Part of the detachment destined for this service was sent; the march of the remainder was stopped by the advance of Nizam Ali with a considerable force to attack the Nabob. But the resolution of the invader failed on learning that the English were preparing to meet him, and after indulging himself in some plundering operations he retired, dispatched a friendly letter to the British governor, and sent him a present of an elephant. The letter and the elephant effected their object, and the government of Madras proceeded to extend their promised aid to Hoossein Ali as if nothing extraordinary had happened. This took place in the year that Clive last returned to India, and in the course of the negotiation conducted by him with the Emperor he, at the request of the Madras authorities, obtained sunnuds bestowing on the Company the Northern Circars, to be held immediately of the imperial government. The sunnuds

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CHAP. VII. were transmitted to Madras, but the government of that presidency hesitated to use them till Bengal should be "quiet," unless under Nizam Ali's confirmation of them, alleging that it was not material to enter on possession till the following year, as Hoossein Ali had anticipated the revenues, and that little more could be obtained than he had secured to the Company. Of the validity of the last reason for forbearance it is impossible to judge; but no difficulty exists with regard to that by which it is preceded. Bengal had not for many years been so "quiet" as it then was, and the project of calling upon a dependent to confirm the gift of his superior is too absurd to merit even exposure. At length,
A. D. 1766. in March, 1766, the government of Madras took courage to give publicity to the grant from the Emperor, and General Calliaud was dispatched with a military force to support the authority of the grantees. Still they could not divest themselves of the impression that it was necessary to secure the consent of Nizam Ali. They were finally gratified by the conclusion of a treaty, by which the occupation of the Northern Circars by the English was made subject to the payment of a considerable tribute: one of the Circars being bestowed as a jaghire on Basalat Jung, was not to be occupied till his death. By the same treaty the English Government became bound to support Nizam Ali against his enemies; and as, at the time when it was concluded, it was well understood that he was about, in conjunction with the Mahrattas, to attack Mysore,

the careful and sagacious diplomatists who then administered the government of Madras, in their anxiety to avoid giving offence, actually plunged their country into difficulties and dangers far greater than were likely to be incurred by a bolder and more consistent policy.

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The Mahrattas were foremost in advancing to the attack of Mysore. To stop their progress, Hyder Ali gave orders to lay waste the country, to break down the embankments of the reservoirs, to poison the wells, to burn the forage, to bury the grain, and to drive off the cattle. The dreadful devastation thus caused did not, however, stop the progress of the invaders. They advanced to Sera, where Meer Sahib, the brother-in-law of Hyder Ali, was stationed with a considerable force. The Mahrattas proposed terms to this officer, which he accepted, and surrendered, together with his own character for fidelity, the fort and district which it was his duty to have defended. Alarmed by his defection, Hyder Ali had recourse to negotiation; and, as the retreat of the Mahrattas is always purchaseable, he was relieved from their presence by submitting to a considerable draft upon his treasury.

While the negotiations between Hyder Ali and the Mahrattas were going on, the army of Nizam Ali and that of the English were advancing to form a junction on the northern frontier of Mysore. The junction was effected; but, from the moment of its taking place, the English commander, Colonel Joseph Smith, saw much to excite suspicion. Like the Mahrattas,

CHAP. VII. Nizam Ali was bought off by Hyder Ali; and, not content with deserting the English, whom he had ensnared to his support, he united his forces with those of Hyder Ali in hostility to them. The government of Madras were slow in giving credit to the defection of their ally, and their infatuation seems to have been unaccountable. "Although," says Colonel Smith, "it was as plain as noon day to every person except the council that" Hyder Ali and Nizam Ali "were preparing to enter the Carnatic jointly, no measures were taken to establish magazines of provisions in proper places, nor any steps to supply our army in time of need;"* and only three days before the invasion actually took place, that officer was directed to pass to the enemy a supply of provisions, of which his own troops were in the greatest want.

Although Colonel Smith had no doubt of the intentions of Hyder Ali and the Nizam, his want of acquaintance with the country subjected him to

A. D. 1767 surprise. On the 25th August, some cattle belonging to the English army were driven off, and the cavalry hastily moving out to recover them, found themselves attacked by very superior numbers, who charged them into the very lines of the encampment. The loss of men was considerable, and the loss of the cattle was a severe misfortune to a force very insufficiently provided with the necessaries for a campaign.

* Letter from Colonel Smith to Lord Clive, referred to in Wilks's Historical Sketches.

A corps of British troops from Trichinopoly, under Colonel Wood, was advancing, and Colonel Smith's movements were directed towards forming a junction with this body. On his way he was attacked, on the 3rd September, by Hyder Ali, with a large force; but the attack was ill conducted, and ended in the complete route of the confederates. Colonel Smith estimated the loss of the enemy at two thousand;* his own was not more than one hundred and seventy killed and wounded. The victory was complete; but the want of provisions previously felt had been aggravated by the loss, during the action, of the small quantity of rice in store. Apprehensive of another attack while in this desperate condition, Colonel Smith moved with all speed towards Trinomaly, where he arrived on the day after the battle, his troops having been without either refreshment or rest for twenty-seven hours. Here, on the 8th September, he was joined by Colonel Wood.

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At Trinomaly, Colonel Smith had been led to believe that he should find abundance of stores. The expectation was miserably disappointed, and he was almost immediately obliged to remove his troops to the eastward in search of food, leaving his sick and wounded and his military stores in Trinomaly. The enemy made a shew of attacking that place, but withdrew on the return of Colonel Smith, on the 14th, with a small supply of provisions. These

* Colonel Wilks seems to think this rather an exaggerated estimate.

CHAP. VII. were exhausted in two days, and another excursion for food became necessary. While the English army was thus depending for its daily bread almost on the chance of the day, the difficulty of procuring it was aggravated by the ravages of above forty thousand horse in the service of the enemy, and the suffering of want aggravated by the inclemency of the weather. In these gloomy circumstances, a council of war unanimously declared their conviction of the expediency of withdrawing the troops into cantonments, but the authorities of the presidency refused their consent. Indeed, nothing but the most dire necessity could have justified such a step; but it had been well if the government, who insisted upon the army remaining in the field under circumstances of so much discouragement and distress, had made some slight provision to render it effective.

The enemy were aware of the distress which prevailed in the English army, and they deferred an attack till the effect of long-continued and aggravated privation should increase the probability of success. Colonel Smith, however, had succeeded in discovering some considerable stores of grain which had been subterraneously concealed. This happy accident increased the efficiency of his troops for the
A. D. 1767. conflict which was approaching. On the 26th of September the enemy ventured to commence a distant cannonade upon Colonel Smith's left from sixteen of their heaviest pieces. Colonel Smith made a movement from his right, round a hill which concealed the great body of the confederated army from his view, for

the purpose of turning or coming in contact with their left. The enemy observing this movement, and concluding that it was made in retreat, put their troops in motion, for the purpose of crossing and intercepting the English column. The two armies were thus marching round the hill at the same time, each concealed from the view of the other, although in a very short space of time their meeting was inevitable. When it took place the surprise was reciprocal. The first struggle was for the possession of the hill. It was secured for the English by the exertions of Captain Cooke, and some rocks, forming a position of considerable strength, were wrested from a large body of the enemy's infantry. When the troops were drawn up in order of battle, the contrast between the numbers was striking. The English force consisted of fourteen hundred European infantry, thirty European cavalry, nine thousand sepoys, and fifteen hundred exceedingly bad native cavalry belonging to Mahomet Ali. The numbers of the enemy cannot be ascertained with equal accuracy, but they have been computed at seventy thousand, of which more than half were cavalry. These were drawn up in a crescent, half encircling the British force, and seemingly sufficient to overwhelm them. The enemy had about one hundred pieces of cannon, but not more than thirty could be brought into action. The English had about the latter number, which being steadily and skilfully served, nearly silenced those opposed to them. The guns were then turned upon the dense

CHAP. VII. and frowning masses of the enemy's cavalry. For a few minutes the fire was sustained with sullen calmness, and the horsemen appeared to be in expectation of orders to charge. None were given—to sit inactive and unmoved amidst the deadly havoc produced by the well directed fire of the English was beyond the power of endurance, and myriads of flying cavalry soon covered the field in every direction. Hyder, who had for some time perceived that all was lost, now drew off his cannon, and urged Nizam Ali to take the same course; but the courage of the Soubahdar at this moment raged at more than fever heat, and he declared that he would meet the death of Nazir Jung, rather than save his life by dishonourable flight. The advance of the British army in line abated his energy, and he gave orders for the guns to be withdrawn. The elephants bearing the women of his establishment were in the rear, and these too were ordered to turn. A soft voice from the covered vehicle borne by one of them exclaimed, "This elephant has not been taught so to turn, he follows the standard of the empire." The English shot fell thick and heavy around, but the feminine champion of the honour of the empire would not suffer her elephant to be turned till the standard had passed, when she withdrew followed by her train. Nizam Ali was less fastidious in reference to such minute points of honour. True, he had invoked the fate of Nazir Jung in preference to dishonourable retreat; but within an hour after this burst of chivalrous feeling, he and a select

body of cavalry were galloping to the westward, the superintendence of the retreat of his army being a duty unworthy of his royal attention. On the following day the confederated army was observed at a distance in full retreat; but a train of forty-one pieces of artillery was thought not too far advanced to be beyond the possibility of capture. The attempt was made, and succeeded. Nine pieces had been taken on the preceding day, and fourteen more were subsequently secured. The loss of the English was one hundred and fifty men; that of the enemy was believed to exceed four thousand. The defeat of the allies had the effect of clearing the country of various parties which had been employed in ravaging it, and had plundered almost to the gates of Madras.

The rainy season approaching, the British troops were withdrawn into cantonments. Hyder Ali, however, allowed not any repose to himself or his troops. Having gained possession of Tripatore and Vaniambaddy, two places of inconsiderable value, he proceeded to attack Amboor, a place of some strength, situated on the summit of a mountain of smooth granite. It was defended by Captain Calvert, an officer of distinguished bravery. In five days, Hyder Ali had so completely dismantled the lower fort, that it was no longer tenable; and Captain Calvert, with a garrison of five hundred sepoys and a few Europeans, retired to the citadel. The native governor being discovered to be in correspondence with the enemy, was placed in confinement, and his men disarmed. This proceeding disconcerted Hyder Ali's plans. He still,

CHAP. VII. however, prosecuted the siege, and effected a practicable breach, but, fortunately for the besieged, in a part which was inaccessible. After many abortive attempts to surprise the place, Hyder Ali sent a flag of truce to summon the garrison, and the opportunity was taken of bestowing a florid eulogium on the brave defence which had been made. The answer of the blunt soldier to whom it was addressed was, that Hyder Ali had not yet offered him an opportunity of deserving the compliment. Another flag arrived, with the offer of a large bribe and the command of half Hyder Ali's army as the price of the surrender of the citadel. Captain Calvert, in reply, advised Hyder Ali to respect the lives of his servants, as the future bearer of any similar message would immediately be hanged in the breach. Hyder Ali had
A. D. 1767. commenced operations against Amboor on the 10th of November. His movements had called the British army from their cantonments; and when Colonel Smith, on the 7th December, arrived in sight of Amboor, he had the satisfaction of perceiving the British flag still flying there. The government marked their approbation of the conduct of the garrison, by directing the rock of Amboor to be borne upon their colours.*

On the approach of the British army, Hyder Ali

* Wilks's Historical Sketches, vol. ii. page 45. It is a lamentable fact, that Captain Calvert, whose conduct on this and other occasions received, as it deserved, the public approbation of his government, was subsequently brought to a court-martial, and convicted of defrauding the Company by false returns.

retired, followed by Colonel Smith, when that officer was not compelled to halt by the want of provisions. Colonel Wood, who had advanced from Trichinopoly, joined Colonel Smith, without an effort on the part of the enemy to prevent it Hyder Ali, however, made some occasional demonstrations of activity. He moved in person with four thousand horse, two thousand foot, and five guns, to attack a convoy, under Major Fitzgerald, at the pass of Singarpetta. The object of the movement was discovered in time to admit of strengthening the English force, and the attack failed. At the close of the year, he ascended the Ghauts with his numerous force, having left a body of cavalry to watch and annoy the British army. At this time the English force, having been two days without rations, was compelled to move in an opposite direction in quest of supplies.

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Depressed by the reverses which had attended his arms, and alarmed by an expedition dispatched from Bengal, which threatened the safety of Hyderabad, Nizam Ali had, early in the month of December, opened a secret communication with Colonel Smith. In the department of intelligence, the arrangements of Hyder Ali were perfect, and he was soon apprized of what had taken place. Intimating to Nizam Ali that he was not unacquainted with his advances to the English, Hyder Ali affected not to be displeased, but to consider the step as a necessary measure of the temporizing policy it was desirable to maintain, till a favourable opportunity should

CHAP. VII. arise for reuniting the Mussulman interests in strength sufficient to expel the infidels from the Deccan. He suggested, however, the expediency of separating the two armies. Nizam Ali immediately acted on the suggestion, by moving to the northward, and on the same day he sent an officer openly to the English camp. Colonel Smith recommended a mission to the presidency, and eventually a treaty was concluded, to which the Nabob, Mahomet Ali, was also a party. The weakness of the government of Madras was here again visible, for, after they had reduced their enemy to sue for peace, they consented to become his annual tributaries to no inconsiderable amount. On the other hand, Hyder Ali was denounced as a rebel and an usurper; and, as a just punishment of his misdeeds, the dewanny of Mysore was transferred to the English, upon the easy conditions of conquering the country, and rendering to Nizam Ali a large additional tribute.

The situation of Hyder Ali had tempted some of the Malabar chiefs to make an effort to throw off his yoke, and the government of Bombay had fitted out a formidable expedition against him. Mangalore being left with an insufficient garrison, fell into the hands of the English without material resistance, and the commander of Hyder Ali's fleet from pique, it is said, at the appointment of a cavalry officer to be his superior, surrendered his charge to the same power. Buswaraj Drooj, or fortified island, and some other places, were also captured; but in an attempt upon

part of the works of Cananore the English were defeated with considerable loss. Indeed their temporary success soon deserted them. Hyder Ali not only dispatched troops to support his interests on the western coast, but proceeded there in person. The greatest care was taken to withhold from the English force intelligence of his approach, and by apparent inactivity to deceive them into a fancied security till the moment arrived for striking an effective blow. Not a soldier of Hyder Ali's was visible till an overwhelming army, led by himself, suddenly appeared before Mangalore early in the month of May. The place was forthwith quitted by the English, and in attempting to embark the garrison in boats, severe loss was sustained, through the mismanagement of those by whom the operation was conducted. All the artillery and stores were abandoned to the enemy, and what was worse, the sick and wounded, consisting of eighty Europeans and one hundred and eighty sepoys, were left to their mercy. Little remained to be accomplished on the coast, and that little was soon performed. Hyder Ali then proceeded to Bednore, where he had summoned the principal landholders to meet him. His exactions had made him very unpopular with this class of persons, and they had manifested a disposition to favour the English cause to the extent of readily supplying the invaders with provisions. This was an offence not to be overlooked by Hyder Ali; and in the punishment which he determined to inflict, he contrived at the same time to gratify his vengeance and his avarice. He announced to those

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CHAP. VII. who had attended his summons that their treason was known to him, and that he was about to visit it in a manner better adapted to the existing state of his affairs than by sentencing them to death. A list of the criminals was then produced, and against the name of each an enormous fine appeared. The conduct of Hyder Ali's affairs was marked by great precision; for every purpose there was a distinct provision. Among other establishments nicely contrived so as to contribute to the progress of the great machine of his government was a department of torture. To this the offenders present were immediately consigned, till their guilt should be expiated by payment of the sums in which they were respectively mulcted, and orders were issued for taking similar proceedings with regard to those whose fears had kept them away.

With the Malabar chiefs Hyder Ali adopted different means, but not less characteristic, nor less conducive to his interests. It was intimated to them that their Mysorean lord was tired of his conquests in Malabar, which he had hitherto found a source of charge rather than of profit; that if he were reimbursed the expenses incurred in their attainment, he was ready to abandon them; and that it was his intention that the territories of those who refused to contribute to that purpose should be transferred to those who acceded to the proposal. Not one incurred the threatened forfeiture, and Hyder Ali's officers retired from Malabar laden with the offerings of its chiefs.

So miserably defective were the arrangements of the Madras government and their ally the Nabob in obtaining intelligence, that nearly three months after Hyder Ali had departed for the westward they were uncertain as to the course he had taken. The English arms were, however, successful in reducing Eroad, and many places in the districts of Bâra-mahâl, Salem, Coimbatore, and Dindigul. Colonel Wood deemed it practicable to maintain the countries which thus fell into the hands of the English, by occupying the passes which connected them with Mysore, and these he believed and officially reported to be only three. Not many days after he had made this report he was astonished by the advance of bodies of horse by unsuspected roads, and he then avowed his conviction that no force could prevent their access through the difficult and secret passages of the hills. CHAP. VII.

The division of the army under Colonel Smith was occupied more to the northward. Kistnagherry surrendered to him on the 2nd May. In June possession was obtained of the fortress of Mulwâgul, in a manner little creditable to any of the parties engaged in the transaction.* Colar A. D. 1768.

* It was betrayed by the killadar. A brother of Mahomed Ali had married the sister of this person, and the former being foujdar of Arcot had appointed his brother-in-law to exercise under him the fiscal administration of Trinomaly. The principal was removed from office, and the dependent, to avoid giving in his accounts to Mahomed Ali, went over to Hyder Ali. He was now desirous of a change, and offered to betray his trust on condition that his accounts should be considered closed. Mahomed

CHAP. VII. surrendered shortly afterwards. In July Oosoor was taken, and some other places to the south and west of it. A body of Mahrattas, which had been taken into the English service on the suggestion of Colonel Smith, joined in August. On the day on which the junction was effected, Hyder Ali, having returned from his western expedition, entered Bangalore with the light troops of his advance. He was foiled in an attack upon the camp of the Mahrattas, in which he sustained a loss of about three hundred men. The lead in the attempt was assigned to the cavalry, who were to penetrate to the tent of Morari Row and possess themselves of his head. The infantry were to follow and complete the victory which was anticipated as the result of the attack. Morari Row no sooner learned that the attack was made by cavalry, than, to prevent friends and enemies being mistaken, he gave orders that not one of his men should mount, but each stand at the head of his horse, and

Ali consented; but there was still a difficulty—the garrison were faithful though their commander was not. It happened, however, that the killadar had been instructed to raise as large a number of recruits for his master's infantry as was practicable, and to give special encouragement to men who had been disciplined by the English. The killadar informed his officers that he had succeeded in obtaining two hundred such recruits, being two complete companies, and that on an appointed night they were to arrive with their native officers. At the specified time, a party of English sepoys appeared ascending by a prescribed route. They were led by a European officer, Captain Matthews, not only dressed, but painted, so as to resemble a native. At daylight the mask was thrown off, and the place was soon in the possession of the English.

cut down without distinction every person on horseback. These orders were strictly executed.* From the irregular construction of a Mahratta camp, the advance of cavalry is subjected to numerous impediments, and confusion soon ensued. It was increased by an accident. The state elephant of Morari Row having received a wound, broke loose from his picquets and rushed wildly through the camp. He carried with him the chain by which he had been attached. This he seized with his trunk and hurled furiously against a mass of cavalry which he met, throwing them back headlong over a column of infantry who were behind them. These, ignorant of the cause of the shock, retired in dismay; and before order could be restored, the symptoms of motion in the English camp discouraged a renewal of the attack.

Early in September, Hyder Ali made a circuitous march in a southern direction, for the purpose of cutting off the division of Colonel Wood, who was ascending from Bâramahâl to join Colonel Smith. The route of Colonel Wood lay through a long defile, and Hyder Ali had made the requisite dispositions to be prepared to open on his troops an enfilading fire, on their arrival at a particular spot favourable to the object. The advance of Hyder Ali, A.D. 1768.

* An unfortunate result of these orders was, that Captain Gee, aid-de-camp to Colonel Smith, who had ridden into the camp to ascertain the cause of alarm, was cut down in the darkness and confusion that prevailed.

CHAP. VII. as well as that of Colonel Wood, was reported to Colonel Smith by scouts whom he had sent out to collect intelligence; and the latter officer, perceiving that he had time to anticipate Hyder Ali, and post his division so as to receive him with advantage, advanced with accelerated speed, and dispatched messengers across the hills to apprize Colonel Wood of his intentions. The success of the plan was frustrated by Colonel Wood firing a salute in honour of the approach of his coadjutor in arms. This imprudent mark of respect and exultation warned Hyder Ali to retire, and he lost no time in acting upon the intimation. Colonel Smith gave orders for pursuit, but nothing was gained by it.

The incidents of war were at this time relieved by an attempt at negotiation; but the British authorities demanded more than Hyder would yield, and the only result was that which ordinarily follows unsuccessful attempts at negotiation—an aggravation of hostile feeling.

Mulwâgul returned into the hands of Hyder Ali by means similar to those by which it was lost to him. Colonel Smith had occupied it with a party of his own troops. Two members of council, who were with the army under the name of field-deputies, thought fit to remove them, and to supply their place by a company of Mahomed Ali's troops. Hyder Ali, by tampering with the Mussulman officer in command, prepared the way for its yielding at once to an apparent surprise. Colonel Wood

made a movement to relieve it, but was too late. He succeeded in recovering the lower fort, but was repulsed with loss in an attempt to carry the rock by escalade. The day after this unsuccessful attempt a light body of troops appeared in view, and their object, it was conjectured, was to cover a convoy for the garrison. Colonel Wood moved out with two companies and a gun to reconnoitre, and when at the distance of two miles from his camp perceived three thousand horse followed by a heavy column of infantry approaching to surround him. He galloped back to the nearest picquet, and having sent forward orders to place the baggage in safety and form the line, he returned with the picquet guard, consisting, like the force which had accompanied him, of two companies and a gun. He found the first party completely surrounded, but he forced a passage through the enemy and joined it. Hyder Ali's whole army, however, appeared on an eminence about a mile in front, and the British commander saw that he had no course but to retreat with all speed. He accordingly abandoned his two guns, and prepared to force a passage in the direction from which he had just advanced. His object was aided by a battalion detached from the line to support him, and which attacked in flank the body through which he had to pass. With some difficulty the retreating force reached a point where they could receive further assistance from the line, and the battle was maintained with vigour, but decidedly to the disadvantage of the English force,

CHAP. VII. who gradually receded before the well directed guns and impetuous charges of the enemy.* The unfavourable circumstances under which the action had commenced had never been overcome, and the fortune of the day seemed to be irrecoverably lost to the English. It was retrieved by a stratagem. The baggage guard was commanded by Captain Brooke. This officer had suffered severely in the escalade on the preceding day, and his strength amounted only to four companies and two guns.

* The extraordinary nature of the ground and the singular arrangement of the combatants are thus graphically described by Colonel Wilks. "The whole extent of the ground which was the scene of the farther operations of the day, consisted of a congeries of granite rocks, or rather stones of unequal heights and dimensions, and every varied form, from six to sixteen feet diameter, scattered, 'like the fragments of an earlier world,' at irregular intervals over the whole surface of the plain. Obliquely to the right, and in the rear of the situation in which the advanced troops were engaged, was a small oblong hill, skirted at its two extremities with an impenetrable mass of such stones, but flat and covered with earth at the top to a sufficient extent to admit of being occupied by rather more than one battalion: the rocky skirts of this hill extended in a ridge of about three hundred yards towards the plain of stones, and under its cover the Europeans had been placed in reserve until the action should assume a settled form. Hitherto amid a mass of cover and impediment, which bade defiance to a regular formation, the intervals between the rocks and sometimes their summits were occupied by troops; the smaller openings were converted into embrasures for guns; and support successively arrived from each army to those who were engaged. It was a series of contests for the possession of rocks, or the positions formed by their union, without any possibility of the regular extension of a line on either side, so that a rock was sometimes seen possessed by Mysoreans within the general scope of English defence, and by the English among the Mysoreans."

With this insignificant force he conceived the idea of turning the tide of victory in favour of his country. The sick and wounded were under his protection: as many of them as were able to move were drawn out to add to the apparent strength of his force; the two guns were dragged by volunteer followers, and manned by wounded artillerymen. The summit of a flat rock was chosen as the scene of operation, and was approached by a circuitous and concealed route. Immediately on its being attained, the two guns opened a fire of grape on the enemy's left flank, and the voice of every individual in the little band, sound or sick, joined that of their commander in shouting, Hurrah! Smith! Smith! Throughout the field the impression was conveyed alike to friends and enemies, that the division of Colonel Smith had arrived; and the effect was almost magical. The delusion indeed could not long be maintained: but the temporary advantage which it gave the English allowed Colonel Wood an opportunity of making a better disposition of his force; and when Hyder Ali, after discovering the deception, resumed the attack, he found his opponents well prepared to receive him. Repeatedly foiled in his attempts, he returned again and again, but still in vain; and when darkness put an end to the combat, the English remained in possession of the field. The loss of Hyder Ali was reported to amount to a thousand men; the loss of the English was less than a quarter of that number.

After various marchings and countermarchings unworthy of relation, Hyder Ali laid siege to Oossoor.

CHAP. VII. Colonel Wood moved to relieve it, but so precipitately and incautiously, that he effected little for the benefit of the garrison at Oossoor, while he exposed Bauglore to an attack from the enemy. Bauglore* was garrisoned by part of Mahomed Ali's troops under the command of a British officer. The force of Hyder Ali approached in several distinct columns, preceded by cannon, and attended by all the auxiliaries necessary to the conduct of a siege. The enemy gained possession of the pettah, or town, within the walls, but made no attempt upon the fort; content with loading all the carts and tumbrils that could be spared with the stores and baggage of Colonel Wood's division, which had been left in the pettah for safety, and with the capture of some eighteen pounders which were without the gate. A dreadful scene occurred on this occasion. The entrance of the enemy had caused a rush of men, women, and children, towards the fort for safety, some of them driving camels, horses, or oxen. The gate was suddenly shut, but the masses behind continuing to press on those in front, two thousand human beings, it is said, perished, in common with a larger number of beasts of various kinds, the whole being forced together in an indiscriminate mass. Hyder Ali leisurely retired, after appropriating every thing moveable, and was nearly out of sight when Colonel Wood returned from Oossoor. He appeared again four days afterwards intercepting the march of the English army toward Colar, to which

* This place is about twenty miles south-east of Bangalore.

place they were proceeding in search of supplies, drove in the outposts, and commenced a cannonade from a battery of twelve of his heaviest pieces, including among them those which he had taken at Bauglore. The cannonade was returned by the English, and maintained by both sides through the whole day. At night the enemy apparently retired, and Colonel Wood resumed his march, but had scarcely cleared the ground on which the former attack took place, when he was again assailed by the fire of Hyder Ali's infantry, which continued to annoy him throughout the night. In the morning an attempt was made to intersect the English columns, and destroy them in detail. This was frustrated. The march recommenced, and continued for about two miles, when another attack rendered it necessary to halt. The conflict thus resumed was kept up for some time, when Hyder Ali suddenly withdrew, without any motive discernible by the English. The cause was soon explained, by the arrival of the other division of the English army, now commanded by Major Fitzgerald, Colonel Smith having proceeded to the presidency. Major Fitzgerald having heard of the disaster at Bauglore, had concluded that Colonel Wood's division would be distressed for provisions and equipments. Recalling all the detachments that could be summoned in time, and collecting a large supply of rice, he made a forced march in the direction in which the suffering division was likely to be found, and the sound of the firing in the last affair with Hyder Ali had guided

CHAP. VII. him to the exact spot where his assistance was required. Colonel Wood was in such a state of despondency as, in the eyes of Major Fitzgerald, rendered him incompetent to the duties of command; and the latter transmitted a representation to the commander-in-chief, Colonel Smith, of the necessity of placing the troops under some other direction, for the recovery of the lost honour of the army. Colonel Smith laid this document before the government, and Colonel Wood was ordered to proceed under arrest to Madras. This proceeding appears to have been somewhat harsh. Colonel Wood had displayed little military talent; but he had courage approaching the verge of rashness, if it did not pass it. In his later engagements with Hyder Ali this quality was not manifested; but the cause probably was that, like many other men of sanguine temperament, he was subject, on meeting with reverses, to excessive depression.

In Coimbatore, the English were gradually dispossessed of their posts, which appear to have been arranged with little regard to sound military principles. Fuzzul Oola Khan, one of the ablest generals of Hyder Ali, entered the province with seven thousand men and ten guns, and proceeded vigorously, but cautiously, to effect the object of his advance. Near Caveriporam he received a check from an insignificant force led by a man of very humble station. An English serjeant, named Hoskin, commanded an advanced post of two companies and one gun in a mud fort, which he defended with

a spirit that entitles him to remembrance. Reporting to his officer the success of his resistance to the attempts of the enemy, he added, "I expect them again to-morrow morning in two parties, with guns: I will take the guns from them, with the help of God."* The success of the gallant serjeant was not equal to his noble confidence. In a subsequent attack the fort was carried, but not until it had become a heap of ruins, nor then without a sanguinary conflict. The fate of its brave defender is unknown; he probably met a soldier's death on the spot where he had so eminently displayed a soldier's spirit. Another post at Gujelhutty was well defended by Lieutenant Andrews. It sustained two assaults, in the second of which the English commander fell, and the post was surrendered. Coimbatore and Denaicancota were lost by treachery; and the officer commanding at Palagaut was obliged to save himself and his garrison from massacre by secret flight. In December, Hyder A.D. 1768.
Ali entered Bâramahâl, and the English posts in that province fell with the same celerity as in Coimbatore. In marching for the reduction of Eroad, Hyder Ali encountered an English party, consisting of fifty Europeans and two hundred sepoys, commanded by Captain Nixon. Two deep columns of infantry, supported by twelve thousand horse, moved to their destruction. Captain Nixon and his little force remained firm while the enemy were advancing, and, when the latter had arrived within twenty yards of them, gave fire. The Europeans then rushed for-

* Wilks's Historical Sketches, vol. ii. page 104.

CHAP. VII. ward, and their fifty bayonets spread instant confusion among the enemy's infantry, who broke and fled. This, however, was all that their gallantry achieved. The cavalry of the enemy at the same moment charged the sepoys in flank and rear; and the return of the killed and wounded of the English party included every man, European and native, with the single exception of an officer named Lieutenant Goreham. His life was saved by his knowledge of the country language, of which in the last extremity he availed himself, to request the humanity of a native of rank. Hyder Ali lost no time in advancing to Eroad; and to make his victory known, on arriving there he sent a flag of truce to request the attendance of an English surgeon to attend to the wounded prisoners. An extraordinary proceeding followed. Hyder Ali, on learning the extent of Lieutenant Goreham's lingual acquirements, enjoined him to translate into English a summons, demanding the surrender of Eroad, and inviting the commander, Captain Orton, to repair in person to Hyder Ali's tent, under an assurance that, if terms of capitulation should not be arranged, he should be at liberty to return. With an infatuation for which it is not easy to account, Captain Orton trusted the promise of Hyder Ali.* The result will readily

* Colonel Wilks alludes to a mode of explaining the conduct of Captain Orton, which is almost the only one not deficient in probability. He says, "there is too much ground for believing the report that Captain Orton had dined when he received and accepted this strange invitation."

be conjectured. Captain Orton was detained, and atrocious as this breach of faith at first appears, Hyder Ali was not without excuse. The officer second in command in the English garrison was a Captain Robinson, who had surrendered at Vaniambaddy under parole not to serve again during the war. He was now serving, not only to his own disgrace, but to that of the government which sanctioned the dishonourable act. Hyder Ali declared that the violation of parole by Captain Robinson absolved him from observing his promise to permit the departure of Captain Orton; but, as a proof of his placability, he professed himself willing, if the latter officer would write an order for the surrender of the place, to permit the entire garrison, with their property, to retire unmolested to Trichinopoly. Captain Orton refused—on the following day he consented. How the change was effected does not appear. "The modes," says Colonel Wilks, "cannot be distinctly traced, but may well be imagined." That Captain Orton should have walked into the pitfall prepared for him by Hyder Ali is astonishing; that he should then have sought to extricate himself by an act which, in the eye of strict military justice, merited death, is astonishing; and not less astonishing is the fact that Captain Robinson obeyed the order extorted from Captain Orton, and surrendered the place. The garrison were removed, not to Trichinopoly, but to Seringapatam; and in a dungeon within that city the recreant Captain

CHAP. VII. Robinson perished. This officer's breach of faith afforded Hyder Ali a pretence for a further act of deception. Captain Fassain, who had resisted at Caveriporam till resistance was vain, capitulated on condition of himself and his garrison being released on parole. Like the garrison at Eroad, they too were marched to Seringapatam.

A.D. 1768. Darkly and heavily did the year 1768 close upon the prospects of the British government on the Coromandel coast. A few weeks had wrested from them nearly all that they had previously gained, and Fuzzul Oolla Khan was sent to visit Madura and Tinnevelly, while his master ravaged the country in the neighbourhood of the Cavery, flaming villages and a flying population every where marking his progress. The government of Madras became alarmed, as well they might, and made advances for accommodation. Hyder Ali requested that an English officer might be sent to confer with him, and Captain Brooke* was dispatched thither in compliance with his wish. Hyder Ali expatiated on the aggressions of the English, and on his own desire for peace; on the exertions he had made to promote that object, and on the unreasonable manner in which his overtures had been rejected; on the wrongs which he had received from Mahomed Ali, and on the evil effects of that prince's influence in the councils of the English.

* The officer whose successful stratagem is related at pages 562, 563.

He referred to the advantage of maintaining Mysore as a barrier to Arcot against the Mahrattas, and, adverting to a threatened invasion by that power, intimated that he could not oppose both them and the English at the same time, and that it remained for the latter power to determine whether he should continue to shield them from the former as heretofore, or whether he should unite with the Mahrattas for the destruction of the English. Captain Brooke, in reply, pointed out the superior advantages of an alliance with the English to one with the Mahrattas, to which Hyder Ali assented, and expressed a wish that Colonel Smith should come up to the army invested with full powers of negotiation. Captain Brooke suggested that Hyder Ali should send a vakeel to Madras. This he refused, on the twofold ground that it would give umbrage to the Mahrattas, and that at Madras all his efforts for peace would be frustrated by Mahomed Ali. Before taking his leave, Captain Brooke suggested to Hyder Ali that there was one proof of his friendly and pacific disposition which might readily and at once be afforded: the discontinuance of the excesses by which the country was devastated, and the defenceless inhabitants reduced to the extremity of wretchedness. The proposal met probably with all the success which the proposer expected. Of friendly professions Hyder Ali was profuse, but of nothing more. He answered, that his treasury was not enriched by the excesses complained of, but

CHAP. VII. that he had been compelled to accept the services of some volunteers whose conduct he could not control. The report of this conversation was forwarded to Madras, and Mr. Andrews, a member of council, was deputed to negotiate. He arrived in the camp

A.D. 1769. of Hyder Ali on the 18th of February, and quitted it on the 21st, with proposals to be submitted to the governor and council, having previously concluded a truce for twelve days. The governor of Madras had every reason to desire peace: so great was their distress that the Company's investments were entirely suspended, and it was stated that their resources were insufficient to carry on the war more than four months longer.* Hyder Ali's proposals were, however, rejected, and hostilities recommenced. Colonel Smith, who had returned to the field, watched the movements of Hyder Ali with unceasing vigilance, and frequently counteracted them with admirable skill. The manœuvres of the two armies had brought them about a hundred and forty miles to the southward of Madras, when suddenly dismissing nearly the whole of his infantry, the greater part of his cavalry, together with his guns and baggage of every description, Hyder Ali, with six thousand horse, advanced rapidly towards that

A.D. 1769. place, and on the 29th of March appeared before it. A small party of infantry joined him on the following day. He immediately caused a letter to be addressed to the governor expressing a desire

* Separate letter from Fort St. George, 8th March, 1769.

to treat for peace, and requesting that Mr. Dupre, a member of council and next in succession to the chair, might be deputed to attend him. The character of the man who made this demand, the place from which it was made, and the circumstances under which he had arrived there, all contributed to secure attention to the message. Mr. Dupre proceeded to the camp of Hyder Ali on the morning of the receipt of his letter, and, after a series of conferences, the terms of a treaty were agreed upon. The treaty was executed by the governor and council on the 3rd of April, and by Hyder Ali on the 4th. With reference to the circumstances under which the peace was concluded, Hyder Ali may be regarded as having displayed much moderation. A mutual restoration of captured places was provided for, and Caroor, an ancient dependency of Mysore, which had been for some time retained by Mahomed Ali, was to be rendered back. After the conclusion of the treaty, difficulties arose from a demand of Hyder Ali for the liberation of some persons kept prisoners by Mahomed Ali, and of the surrender of some stores at Colar. With much persuasion the Nabob was induced to comply with the former demand, and the latter was yielded by the British government, probably because it was felt to be vain to refuse.*

CHAP. VII.

A.D. 1769.

Thus terminated the war with Hyder Ali—a war needlessly and improvidently commenced, and con-

* The history of the war with Hyder Ali is based on a comparison of official records with the well-informed and minute narrative of Colonel Wilks.

CHAP. VII. ducted, on the part of the Madras government, with singular weakness and unskilfulness. Its conclusion was far more happy than that government had any right to expect, either from their own measures or from the character of their enemy.

END OF VOLUME I.

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